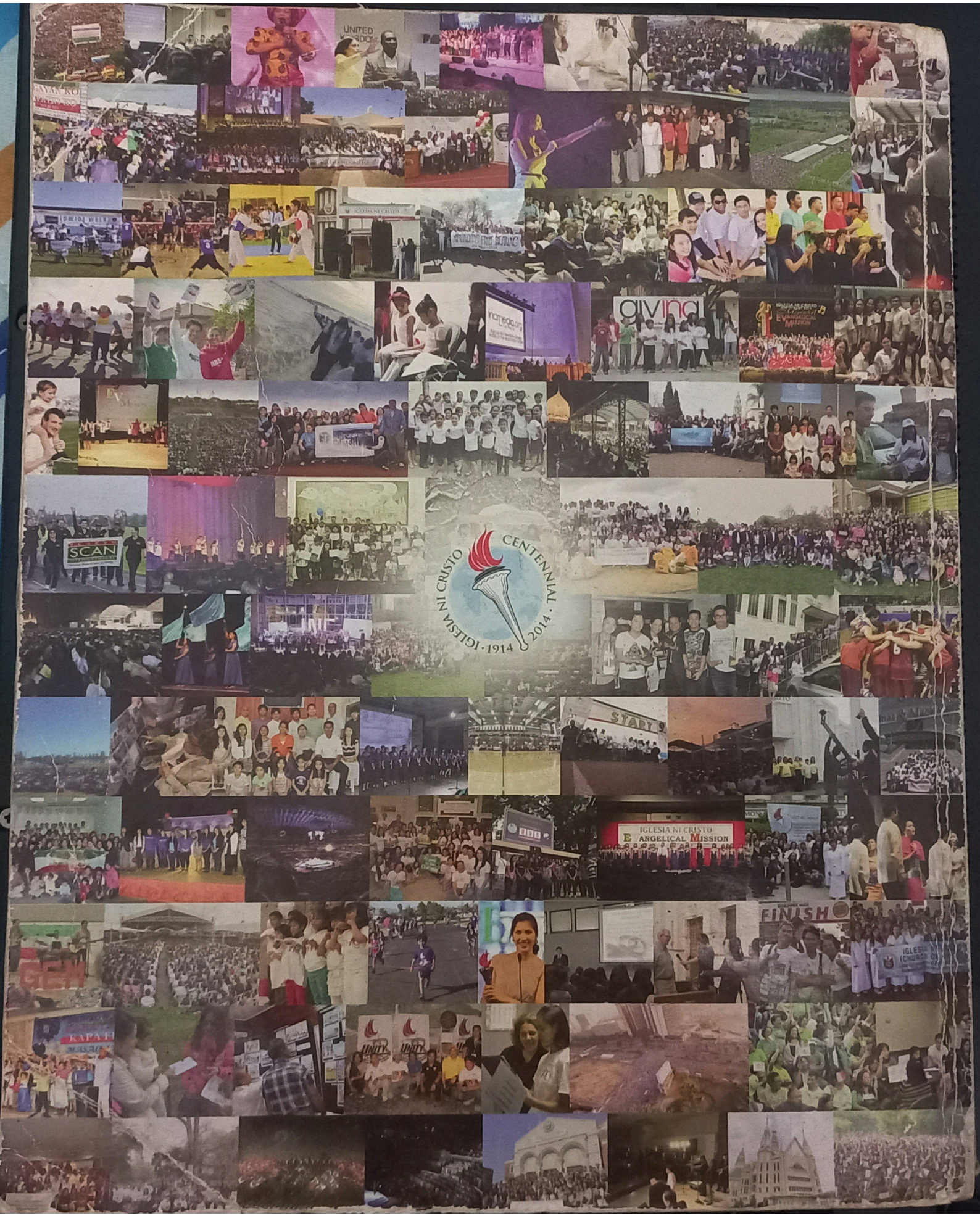
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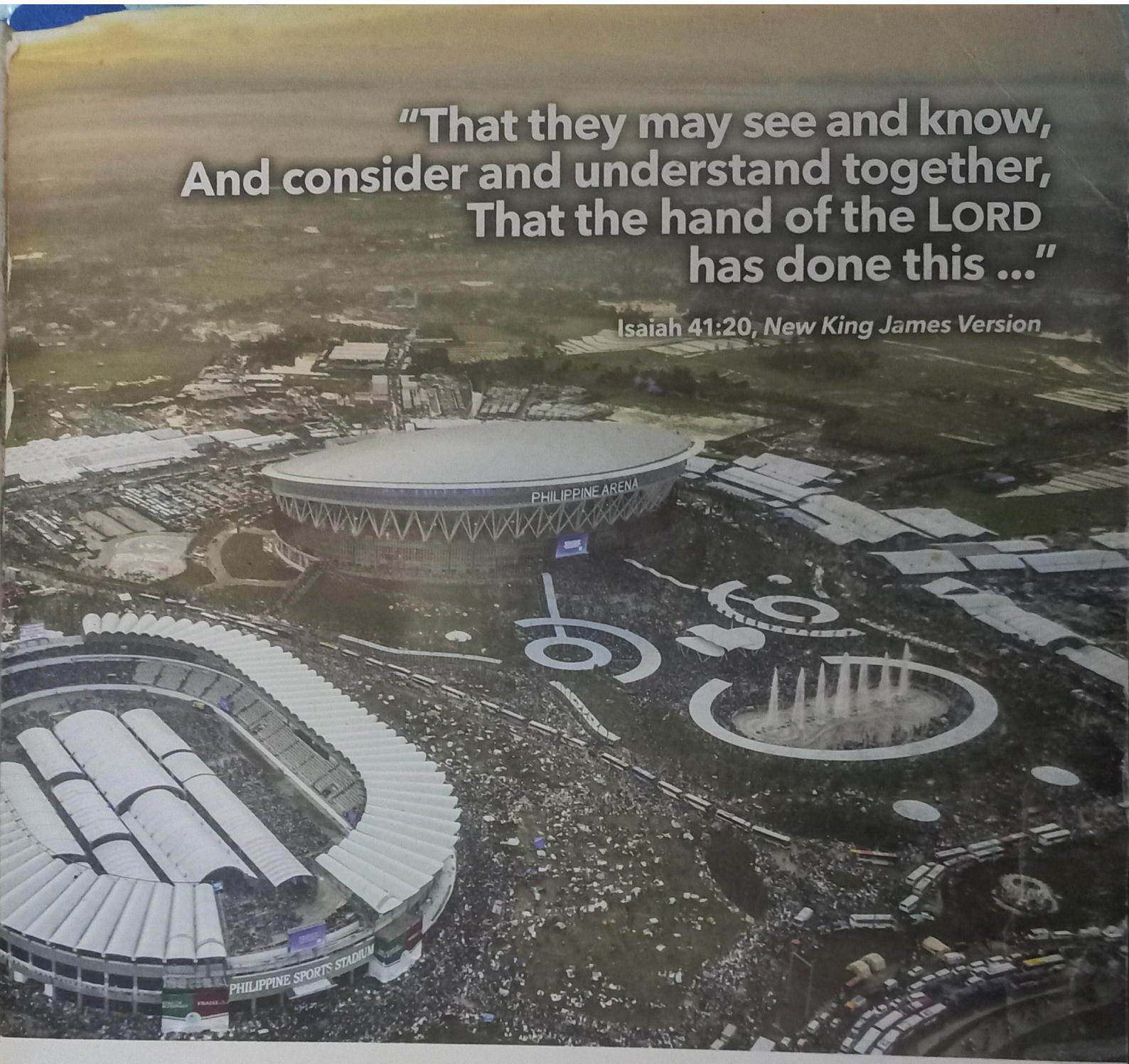
"That they may see and know,
And consider and understand together,
That the hand of the LORD
has done this ..."
Isaiah 41:20, New King James Version
PHILIPPINE ARENA
PHILIPPINE SPORTS STADIUM

PASUGO
GOD'S MESSAGE
The Magazine of the Iglesia Ni Cristo (Church Of Christ)

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population, it became necessary to secure another location. Thus, in June 1978, the school acquired the two top floors of the newly constructed Evangelical College (EVCO) building along Commonwealth Avenue. Brother Eraño presided in the inauguration, instilling the school's rationale for establishment with his unforgettable words: "Let no one teach here anything that will alienate man from God. Let not this school be the battleground of warring students. Let no one destroy the brotherly love that should exist between teachers and students."

The school had then offered 12 collegiate courses. Subsequently, in 1981, NEEI was granted collegiate status. It was then renamed to New Era College (NEC).

The growth and expansion of the school was seen in the following years as NEC added more courses being offered. In 1983, it established its Graduate School and Institute of Education. In 1984, it opened its Pre-school and Elementary Department. By 1986, NEC is complete with pre-school, elementary, and high school departments, and five collegiate and one graduate institutes. A building expansion became necessary once more. Hence, on May 10 that year, a new campus for NEC was inaugurated along St. Joseph Street, Milton Hills, Quezon City. In there, all departments of the college were brought together in one place.

NEC's growth was not limited to the confines of the country's capital as it began to establish its first extension in San Fernando, Pampanga in 1994. Then on June 30, 1995, the school achieved another milestone when on its 20th year it was granted university status. NEC consequently changed its name to New Era University (NEU) since then.

A new era for New Era was ushered by the school's new status. Inspired by its attainment and motivated by the challenge of excellence in education, NEU submitted itself to voluntary accreditation. As the new millennium approached, the school had upped its level of accreditation in its various colleges and departments.

On June 5, 1998, NEU opened another extension in General Santos City in South Cotabato, a city in southern Philippines. In time for its silver anniversary in year 2000, another extension was inaugurated at Lipa City, Batangas, raising the number of the school's extension to three. And as part of the celebration in the main campus that year, NEU opened its College of Law.

New Era University became also known as one of the pioneering schools which implement Inclusive Education for children and youth with Intellectual Difficulties, Learning Disabilities, Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Emotional and Behavioral Disorders through its Special Education (SPED) Program.

Marching toward its ruby year, in 2011, The Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, led the inauguration of the NEU Observatory which was outfitted with cutting edge technology and high-powered communications equipment. Also this year, NEU started to offer Bachelor of Music program in Piano, Voice, Choral Conducting, and Music Education under the College of Music.

Then in time for the Church's centennial this 2014, NEU recently opened the College of Medicine which offers a unique medical curriculum. It introduced the field of medical humanities.

The school has also opened the New Era Univeristy - Vantage Education Management (NEU-VEM) as its arm in promoting access to non-conventional higher education and basic education programs. NEU-VEM has three independent programs namely: the Open/Online University (OU), a distance education program; the Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditaion (ETEEAP), an educational assessment scheme; and the Homeschooling Intervention Program (HIP), an out-of-school study program that offers basic education.

NEU then kicked-off its countdown to its 40th anniversary with the inauguration of the Professional Schools Building led by Brother Eduardo, and NEU President, Dr. Nilo Rosas. NEU also has gone automated, affording the students and employees more comfort in enrolling and security in its premises.

In November this year, the new building for the College of Evangelical Ministry (CEM) situated along Central Avenue is set to be inaugurated. Meanwhile, the school is also looking forward to the opening of its sprawling new campus, which will be situated in the compound of the vast Ciudad de Victoria in Sta. Maria, Bulacan which also houses the recently opened, world-renowned Philippine Arena.

The school has steadily made good in its commitment to produce students who excel academically, and has consistently achieved high passing rates in the country's board examinations—attaining a 100 percent passing rate in the December 2012 Nurses Licensure Examination, and producing topnotchers in 2013 Bar Examinations and 2013 NLE, to mention some of its recent achievements. It has indeed earned a prominent reputation.

But more so, the school continues to fulfill its primary purpose—that is, all of its achievements and triumphs are for the glory of the Almighty.

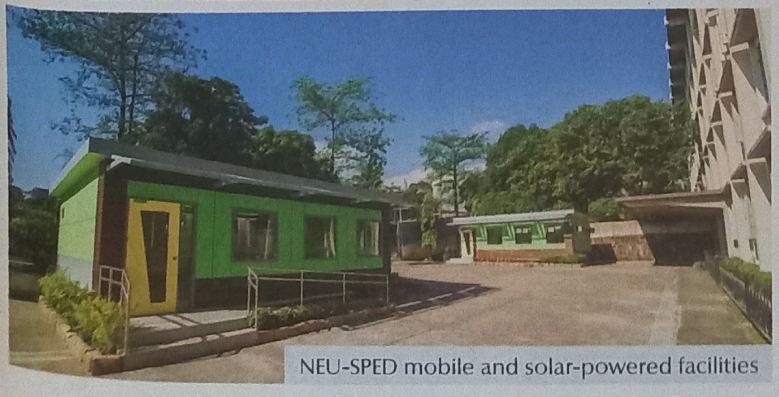
New Era University

An institution for a noble cause

By MANDY A. NEPOMUCENO

NEU Main Building

NEU Professional Schools Building


NEU-SPED mobile and solar-powered facilities

"THE PRIME PURPOSE of this school is for the glory of God," Brother Eraño G. Manalo, the Church's Executive Minister then, firmly stated in his speech in 1978 when the school was only three years young and was about to settle in a new building along Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City. And so, for decades till now while thriving with the presence of challenges in the modern times such as the rapid advances in new technologies, changing needs of the economy, and catering to an ever increasing population of its students, the school continues to uphold that "the implementation and fulfillment of God's words be the prevailing atmosphere inside this structure where wisdom dwells." This is the sole school that has been promoting the true Christian teachings and values hand-in-hand with quality education while most institutions around the world grow increasingly more secular.

The beginning of New Era can be traced back on June 17, 1975 when it was first known as New Era Educational Institute (NEEI). In a building purchased by the Church at 499 Carlos Palanca St., Echague, Quiapo, Manila, it initially offered secondary education. It had 466 pioneer enrollees and 23 faculty members. Justice Serafin Cuevas, who was appointed as Associate Justice to the Supreme Court of the Philippines in 1984, was the first chairman of its Board of Trustees. Appointed as the first principal was Dr. Dolores Garcia.

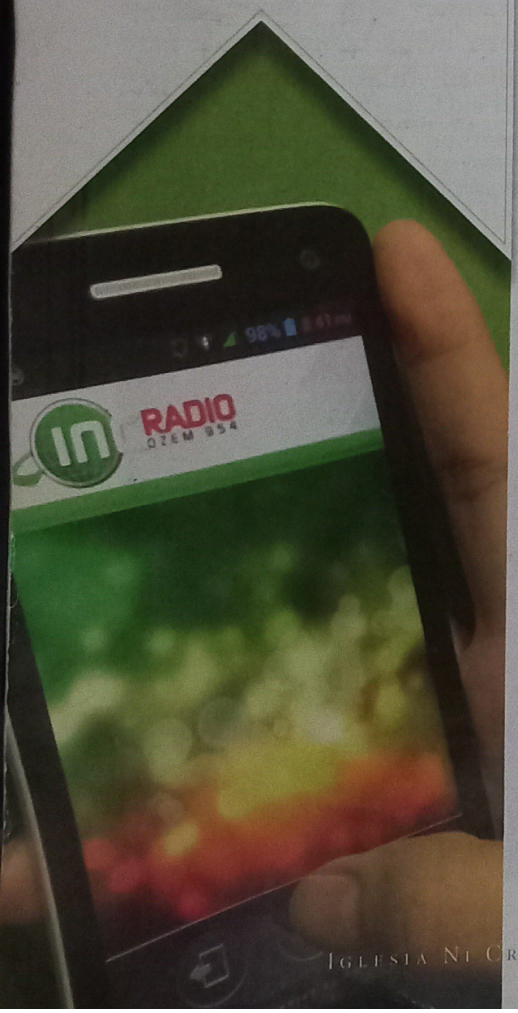
On June 6, 1977, after two crucial years of existence, it had expanded to offer technical and vocational courses under its Center for Livelihood and Skills Training program. The next year, NEEI opened its collegiate department. With its growing

incinema

SCAN INTERNATIONAL

CBI CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD INT'L

The CBI utilizes the Internet—having "CBI Live" streaming through INC Radio and a Facebook fan page that promote the activities of its different chapters.



of providing service to mankind and giving glory to God. To further utilize the organization in information dissemination SCAN I.T. (Information and Technology) was born. It was first called AsCII (Association of Christians in Information and Technology) which aims to promote the activity of the Church through the use of internet and social media. On March 27, 2014 the group was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission as ACTIV (Alliance of Computer Technology and Information Volunteers Incorporated). As a resource group, its purpose is to give guidance to its members on how to use media and technology responsibly. It also acts as a technical support of the CFO in documentation, coverage, and reporting of activities for the Church.

Having the same care for one another

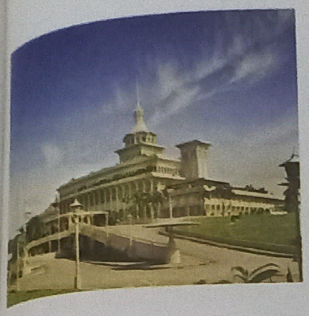
The Philippines achieved universal primary enrollment in 1970 while the number of enrollees in higher educational institutions greatly increased. Because many youth members of the Church had been enrolled in different universities and colleges in the country, the Church Administration established an organization for students, the Christian Brotherhood which was later called Christian Brotherhood International (CBI). It aims to create Christian fellowship among members, promote intellectual and academic excellence, and bind the youth members in common faith, all for the glory of God. CBI chapters in different parts of the globe regularly convene to edify in faith the youth members, primarily those who are living far away from their parents. The organization also utilizes the Internet—having "CBI Live" streaming through INC Radio and a Facebook fan page that promote the activities of its different chapters.

In 2002, sign language was included as a curriculum at the CEM. The Church Administration aim to teach the pristine gospel not only to those who can hear it, but also to the hearing impaired. The teaching of sign language to ministerial students paved the way for the establishment of sign language interpretation in worship services in various local congregations of the Church. On April 12, 2014, the Christian Society for the Deaf was formally established upon the official instruction of the Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo. The founding of this organization intended to care, edify, and organize the members of the Church who are unable to hear. The organization also focuses on propagating the faith to nonmembers who are in the deaf and mute community, so that they too, may know the right way to salvation through the Church Of Christ.

Fully grown body

The colossal growth and expansion of the Church is a strong testament of the handiwork of the Almighty. It is also a realization that we should not be complacent in guarding our faith, always fulfilling the commandments of God and our duties in the Church. As the body of Christ grows, parts of the body must fulfill their share so that it will grow strong and reach its fullest. The 100 years of the Church must serve as an inspiration to everyone to press on and continue to edify one another in love, like what Apostle Paul teaches:

"... according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. 4:16, *NKJV*)



The Church Administration attends to the needs of the brethren in every aspect, most of all in their spiritual life.

Church Administration, through its personnel department, decided to give brethren free recommendations. These paved the way for the creation of the Job Placement Office which at first was under the administration of the Metro Manila ecclesiastical districts. Because of the growing number of job seekers, it was given a place at the first floor of the College of Evangelical Ministry (CEM) Building. Many applicants are given jobs and the office does not collect any placement fees. Furthermore, the Job Placement Office oversees the brethren who are already part of the labor force through the Christian Employees Association (CEA)—an organization of brethren in different companies that aims to establish good and peaceful relationship between the labor sector and the businesses that hire them in the light of God's words. Companies appreciate the value of *Iglesia Ni Cristo* members in their businesses because they serve honestly, efficiently, and faithfully.

At present, the Job Placement Office moved to a new home along Central Avenue, near New Era University with Brother Franklin Bunag as its department head.

On February 6, 1989, an amateur radio group affiliated to the Church was recognized by the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), having goals of providing communication, disaster preparedness and assistance, emergency response, and most of all, giving glory to God. The group exists today as the Society of Communicators and Networkers (SCAN) International. The organization's founding chairman is the Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, who used the theme, "Saving lives is our priority". According to the Executive Minister, the meaning of the theme is to save the lives of the people affected by crisis and calamities, and most of all, to save them on Judgment Day. Today, the organization is under the Christian family organizations (CFOs) led by Brother Angelo Eraño V. Manalo as the Coordinator. The organization, with thousands of members, helps many people here and abroad, fulfilling its advocacy

Brother Eduardo V. Manalo and Brother Angelo Eraño V. Manalo during the inauguration of the Christian Family Organization office (below); and the Honorata G. Manalo Building which currently houses the INC Legal Department (left)

Edifying the growing body in love

By REYNALDO G. ARIZALA JR.

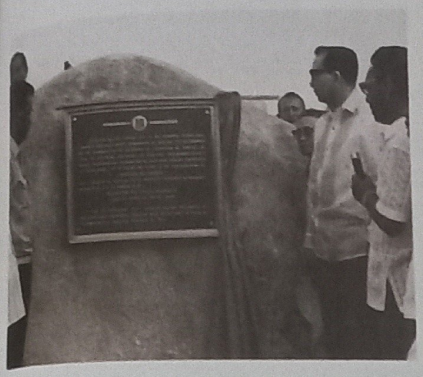
SINCE THE EMERGENCE of the Church Of Christ in the Philippines on July 27, 1914, many observers have noticed how this organization had flourished and eventually become global. From its humble beginnings in Punta, Sta. Ana, Manila, the Church crossed the Pacific Ocean to Hawaii, where the gathering of the brethren in the Far West started. This became a gateway for many nonmembers abroad to know the pristine gospel and thus, to be called inside the fold. From the West, it crossed borders and continents, calling more people inside the true Church. Now in its centennial year, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* has already been established in 98 countries and territories, with about 122 ecclesiastical districts, and membership from 124 nationalities and races.

Because of the fast growing number of membership coming from all walks of life, the Church Administration attends to the growing needs of the brethren in every aspect, most of all in their spiritual life. To address these growing needs, a number of organizations in the Church were established.

Establishing in good works

In early 80's the Church already established organizations that gave humanitarian services to both members and nonmembers alike. The Christian Lawyers Association (CLASS) opened its center for legal assistance at Maligaya Building 2, Quezon City. Brother Eraño G. Manalo, who was the Executive Minister at that time, approved the establishment of CLASS to assist the less fortunate in legal matters, giving free advice, assisting in making letters, contracts, and sworn statements needed for legal purposes. If the case is already in a court of law, CLASS will send a lawyer who will handle the case for free. Many benefited from the services of the legal assistance center and until now these endeavors are still fostered by the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* Legal Department.

In 1984, when business establishments in the Philippines searched for employees to be part of their labor force, many showed preference for workers who were members of the Church. To help the brethren to be part of the growing demand for work, the



(Far left) The unveiling of the marker in *Barrio* Maligaya (now called *Barangay* Maligaya) led by Brother Eraño G. Manalo. The Church's first ever resettlement program located in Laur, Nueva Ecija, was allotted for the brethren who suffered severe religious persecution in Tarlac.

(Left) An aerial view of a portion of *Barangay* Bagong Buhay, another resettlement program of the Church, also in Nueva Ecija, for the brethren who were victims of the Mount Pinatubo eruption.

C

D

E

The Church establishes resettlement communities for the brethren severely persecuted and for those who are calamity-stricken. These communities are provided with appropriate livelihood programs, and other job opportunities, as well as schools for the children.

Part of the workforce of the Church (i.e. ministers, evangelical workers, and volunteer Church workers) work full-time for the various concerns of the whole Church. Thus, the Church Administration not only provides them with proper and safe shelter, but also extends support to the widows and their children by putting up housing projects for them.

But, far beyond these material blessings in this life, God's people have been hoping to dwell in the final and eternal home—the Holy City.

A

(A) Brother Eduardo V. Manalo's visit in the ongoing construction of units in the New Era resettlement program in Leyte, for the victims of Typhoon Haiyan

(B) Livelihood opportunities and equipment for the brethren in Leyte

(C) Housing units in the Tagumpay housing project in Rodriguez, Rizal

D) the UNLAD Garment Factory in Dasmariñas, Cavite

(E) Some of the Church's housing projects in Quezon City

B

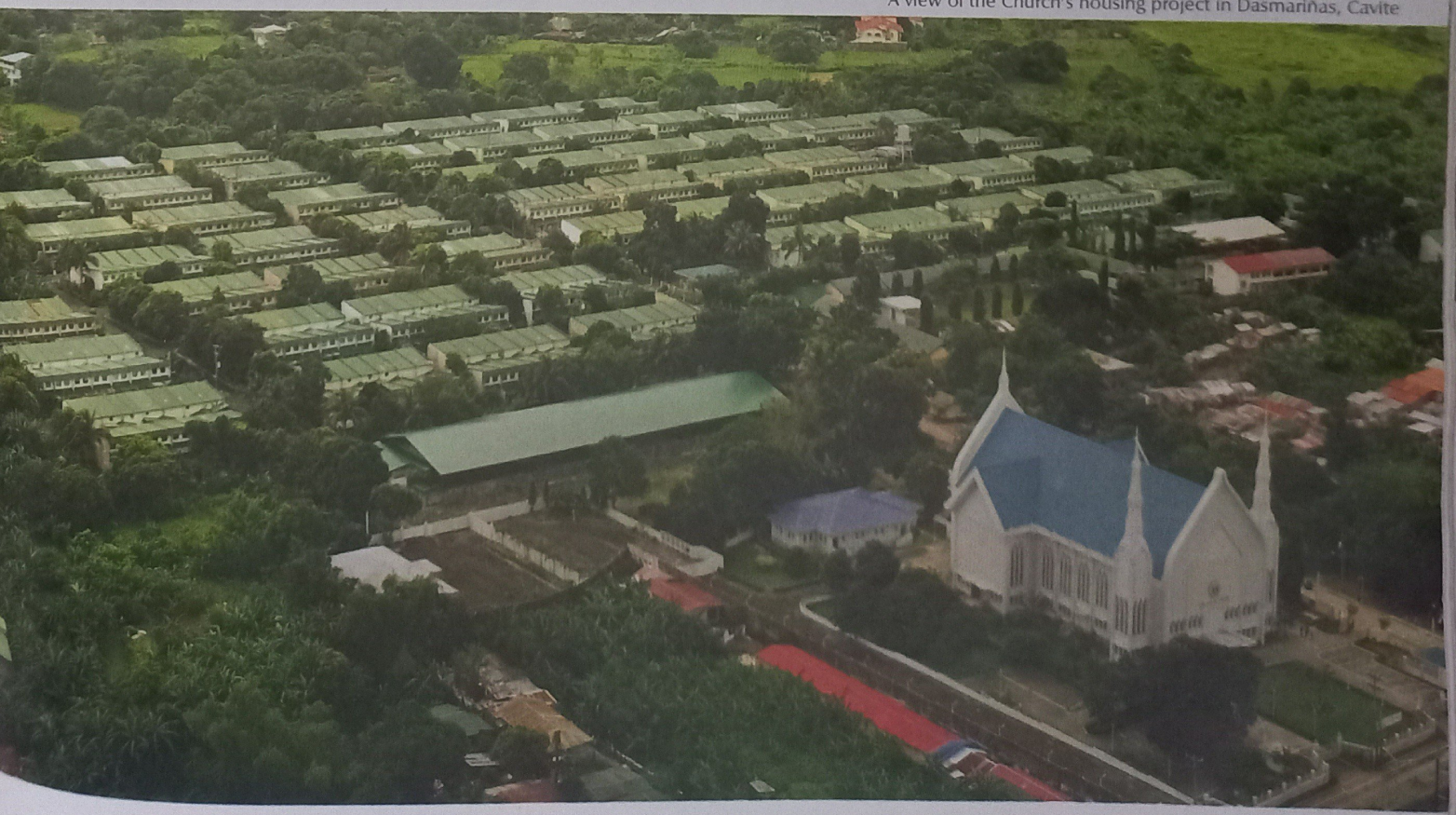
God's promise fulfilled

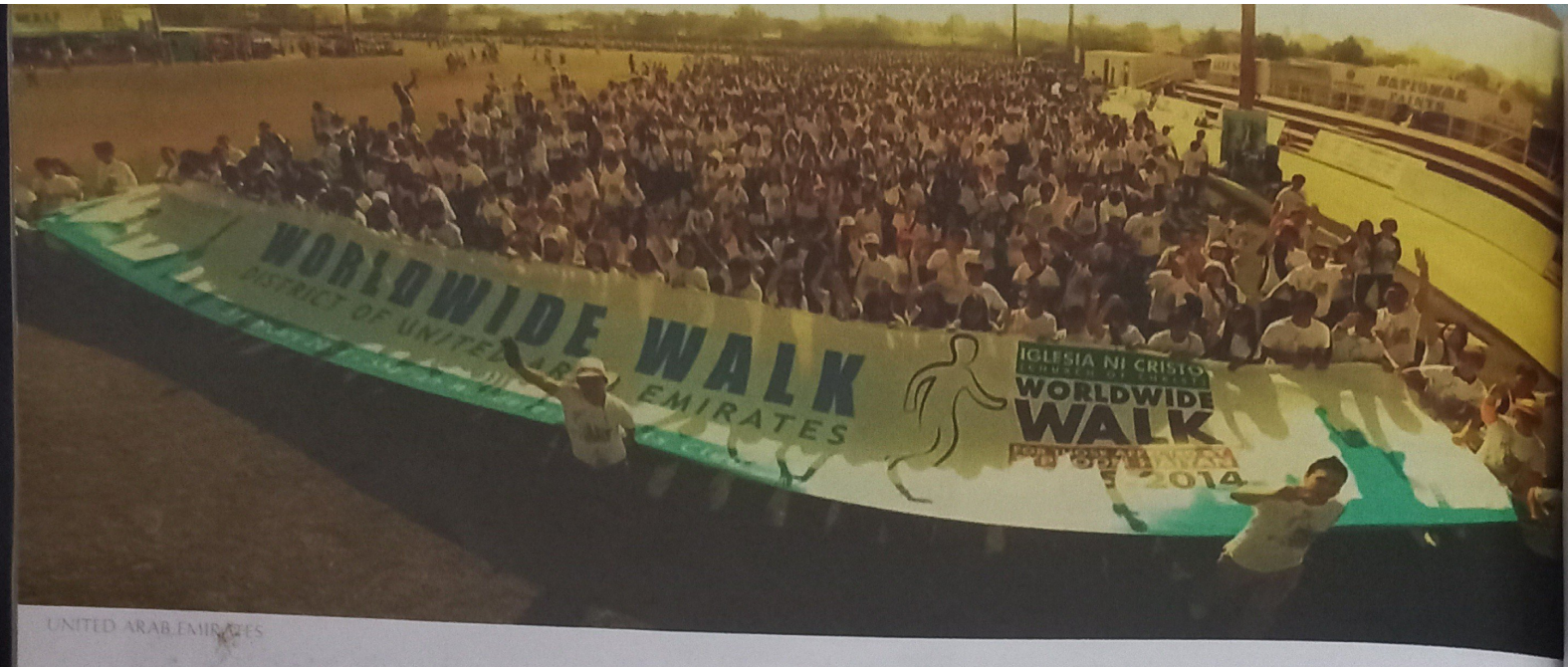
Resettlement programs and housing projects of the Church Of Christ

By ERVIN M. ALMEDINA

"WHEN MY PEOPLE in their need look for water, when their throats are dry with thirst, then I, the LORD, will answer their prayer; I, the God of Israel, will never abandon them" (Isa. 41:17, *Today's English Version*). Indeed, God continues to fulfill to His nation in these last days His promises. For one hundred years now, the Church, under different circumstances, has never been abandoned by God. Through the leaders He sent to lead His people, God has proven His constant love and concern for them. Such concern is the reason behind the purchase of lands for the establishment of the Church Of Christ's resettlement programs and housing projects. The Church Administration also sees to it that a house of worship for every community of brethren in a resettlement area is also built for the spiritual needs of the brethren.

A view of the Church's housing project in Dasmariñas, Cavite





UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The New Era University, the Church's school, offers free education in various communities through its literacy programs, such as the Summer Preparatory and Kindergarten Program (SPKP) and Alternative Learning System (ALS). The Church also provides livelihood assistance, such as job referrals or coordination and job training programs through the UNLAD Kabuhayan, Inc.

Also, from the 600-hectare Church-owned land in Laur, Nueva Ecija (the first resettlement project of the Church in 1965 whose beneficiaries are the Church members who suffered severe religious persecution in Tarlac) to the 3,000 hectare Church-owned land in Alang-alang, Leyte East (the most recent resettlement project of the Church in 2014 which is still under construction as of this writing, whose beneficiaries will be the Church members who were displaced by Typhoon Haiyan), the Church raises self-sustaining eco-farming communities that provide housing units and job opportunities to the brethren.

And soon, in the city called Ciudad de Victoria in Bulacan, which also houses the internationally-renowned and grand multi-purpose structure Philippine Arena, the new Eraño G. Manalo Medical Center and the New Era University Bocaue Campus will rise which is expected to cater to the various needs of the growing population of the Church.

Commendations from the international community poured when the Church pooled its resources to conduct massive humanitarian missions. The Guinness Book of World Records, a well-known international body that acknowledges extraordinary feats around the globe, had bestowed recognition time and again to the Church for its efforts in giving aid to all who are in dire need. The brethren had heard representatives from them proclaim the Church and its members "Officially amazing!" numerous times (five world records in charity events in a span of two years).

When the Church staged the unprecedented international charity walk dubbed as the World Wide Walk early this 2014, the whole world witnessed the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* unity as brethren-participants all over the Philippines and various locations around the world (135 in all) conducted a 24-hour continuous walk that started in New Zealand and ended in Hawaii, some even marching through freezing temperatures and long travels, moved with the noble cause of helping the needy.

But what counts the most, more than the records set, is the knowledge that these endeavors give glory to God. Members of the Church Of Christ do believe that everything they have come from the Almighty and these are manifestations of His boundless mercy, and it is His will that they obey when they love and help their brethren and fellowmen. And so, even those who do not have much in this life, are overjoyed and continue to willingly share anything that they can muster to the less-privileged, brethren and fellowmen. As Christ's disciples before accounted, "We can be assured of receiving from God whatever we ask Him for, because we are obeying His commands (i.e. especially the one about loving others) and are practicing what is pleasing to Him. So then, as occasion *and* opportunity open up to us, let us do good to all people. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command:

"Love your neighbor as yourself." (Excerpted from I John 3:22, *An Understandable Version*; Gal. 6:10, *Amplified Bible*; Gal. 5:14, *New Living Translation*)

from the Christian family organizations (CFOs)—*Buklod*, *KADIWA*, *Binhi*, they enlist in their directory volunteer brethren who may be capable of helping out in the missions, such as doctors, dentists, and other medical personnel.

Also aware of the other needs, the Church Administration mobilizes these offices in providing assistance to people. The SSO conducts seminars on various health issues and coordinates family enrichment programs, such as responsible parenting and family planning, youth forums, and drug abuse prevention. The Church through the CFOs also manages guidance and counseling for youth and married couples. It also gives referrals through the Felix Y. Manalo Puericulture, Maternity and Family Planning Center, the New Era General Hospital, and private clinics of brethren.

BONN, GERMANY

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, USA

KING WILLIAM'S TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

God's love abounding
The Church Of Christ's social services

By MANDY A. NEPOMUCENO and REYNALDO G. ARIZALA JR.

"Whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone, especially to our Christian brothers and sisters."

Gal. 6:10, *New Living Translation*

TO LOVE ALL PEOPLE, not only with words and talk but also by action and true caring—this is what God has commanded His own nation even before and until now. True Christians then must be committed to helping others, motivated by love and compassion. Though primarily concerned with the spiritual welfare of its members, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* engages in socio-civic works, extending its hand to contribute to the welfare of those in need, affording it to members and nonmembers alike, not only during calamities, but at all times.

In these endeavors, the Church receives in return both admiration and derision from various quarters. But what cannot be denied and questioned is that ever since the time of Brother Felix Manalo, the Church has been reaching out and giving aid to the less fortunate, mindful of the truth that these pursuits give glory to the Almighty.

Whenever catastrophe strikes, the Church is always quick to send a joint medical-dental-relief mission dubbed *Lingap sa Mamamayan* (Aid to Humanity), and even rescue operations with the help coming from the volunteers from the Society of Communicators and Networkers (SCAN) International. This group also organizes safety-education training and environmental sanitation activities. The Church also does this in depressed areas in the Philippines. It has a counterpart abroad called INC Giving initiated by the brethren to share their faith through acts of kindness by meeting people's everyday needs, supporting local neighborhoods, and strengthening the bond with their communities.

The Church monitors these projects through the Social Services Office (SSO) and the Felix Y. Manalo Foundation, Inc. With the assistance

Ever since the time of Brother Felix Manalo, the Church has been reaching out and giving aid to the less fortunate.

Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." (Acts 11:28-30, *Ibid.*)

Though spread far and wide, these early Christians were united in action. The same unity is evident in the members of the Church Of Christ today who send what relief they can, through the Church Administration, to those who are in need.

That such socio-civic activities should be done in a timely manner is also in keeping with the will of God:

"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do *so*. Do not say to your neighbor, 'Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give *it*,' When you have it with you." (Prov. 3:27-28, *Ibid.*)

Christian kindness becomes even more vital since, with the nearing Judgment Day, we are told to: "Remember that there will be difficult times in the last days" (II Tim. 3:1, *Good News Translation*).

"Countries will fight each other; kingdoms will attack one another. There will be famines and earthquakes everywhere. All these things are like the first pains of childbirth." (Matt. 24:7-8, *Ibid.*), said the Lord Jesus Christ, to describe some of what would take place in these last days.

There is no question that there are many kind people who are trying to ease the pain of those who suffer.

We, members of the Church Of Christ, though just ordinary citizens, also strive to do our part by being kind to the needy. We firmly believe that we are blessed when we do this: "It is a sin to despise one's neighbor, but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy" (Prov. 14:21, *Today's New International Version*).

During these hard times, when we all the more need to be blessed by God, the Bible assures us that God's servants who are kind to the needy and the poor will be blessed: "Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God" (Prov. 14:31, *Ibid.*).

Those who honor the Lord God will receive His blessing that brings true joy:

"If you want to be happy, be kind to the poor; it is a sin to despise anyone." (Prov. 14:21, *Good News Translation*)

So, for as long as there are poor and needy people in the land, we, members of the Church Of Christ, led by the Church's Administration, will continue to fulfil our Christian responsibility by engaging in socio-civic activities. We firmly believe that to love and to be compassionate to others by providing help when it is in our power to do so will bring blessings and happiness to us as well.

QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

On why the Church Of Christ takes part in socio-civic activities

By EDWIL D. ZABALA

THE ADMINISTRATION of the Church Of Christ is at the forefront of the Church's socio-civic activities. The Executive Minister also untiringly exhorts members to treat social concern as a God-given duty. To this end, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo sets the example by treating others with love and compassion as well as by providing aid to those who are in need. The Church Administration leads and enjoins members in the firm faith that the Lord God will bless all His servants who help the needy.

God's commandment: "... *You shall love your neighbor as yourself* ..." (Matt. 19:19, *New King James Version*), as pointed out by our Lord Jesus Christ, clearly places social concern within the realm of Christian responsibility.

Such love is expressed not just through words but also through action:

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10, *Ibid.*).

Apostle Paul's exhortation, "*Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share ..." (I Tim. 6:18, *Ibid.*), proves that Christians are to engage in such works with enthusiasm.

This is why social concern is a duty of Church Of Christ members. It is a proof of obedience to the Lord God's command, as taught by Peter, an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we love our fellowmen and have compassion for them:

"Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous." (I Pet. 3:8, *Ibid.*)

Such was shown by the members of the Church during the time of the apostles when they sent help to those who lacked food due to a great famine:

"Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the

MANILA, PHILIPPINES

LEYTE, PHILIPPINES

tamasahin ang kabutihan ng Diyos, tiyak na parusa ang kanilang daranasin:

"Kung ang aking aral ay di pakikinggan At ang Kautusa'y hindi iingatan, Kung gayon, daranas sila ng parusa Sa ginawa nilang mga kasamaan, Sila'y hahampasin sa ginawang sala." (Awit 89:31-32, *Ibid.*)

Hindi lang mabibigo ang tao na mapabuti ang kaniyang buhay sa mundong ito, may mabigat na parusa pang itinakda ang Diyos sa tao dahil sa kasalanan:

"At ang kamatayan at ang Hades ay ibinulid sa dagatdagatang apoy. Ito ang ikalawang kamatayan, sa *makatuwid ay* ang dagatdagatang apoy." (Apoc. 20:14)

Ang lunas sa kahirapan ng sangnilikha

Upang makalaya ang tao sa sumpang dinaranas niya dahil sa kasalanan, mahalagang makabilang siya sa mga tinubos ni Cristo:

"Sa sumpa ng kautusan ay tinubos tayo ni Cristo, na naging sumpa sa ganang atin; sapagka't nasusulat, Sinusumpa ang bawa't binibitay sa punong kahoy." (Gal. 3:13)

Ang mahalagang dugo ni Cristo ang ipinangtubos sa kasalanan:

"Na inyong nalalamang kayo'y tinubos hindi ng mga bagay na nangasisira, ng pilak o ginto, mula sa inyong walang kabuluhang paraan ng pamumuhay, na ipinamana sa inyo ng inyong mga magulang; Kundi ng mahalagang dugo, gaya ng korderong walang kapintasan at walang dungis, *sa makatuwid baga'y ang dugo* ni Cristo." (I Ped. 1:18-19)

Ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ang pinatutunayan ng mga apostol na tinubos ng dugo ni Cristo:

"Ingatan ninyo kung gayon ang inyong mga sarili at ang buong kawan na rito'y hinirang kayo ng Espiritu Santo na mga katiwala, upang pakanin ang iglesia ni Cristo na binili niya ng kaniyang dugo." (Gawa 20:28, isinalin mula sa *Lamsa Translation*)

Sa kabila ng kahirapang nararanasan

Kung ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ay natubos na, bakit nagdurusa pa rin sa mundong ito? Ito'y sapagkat hindi lamang ang karapatang maglingkod sa Diyos at kay Cristo ang tinamo nila kundi maging ang pagtitiis alang-alang kay Cristo:

"Ipinagkaloob niya sa inyo ang karapatang makapaglingkod kay Cristo, hindi lamang ang manalig sa kanya kundi ang magtiis din naman dahil sa kanya." (Filip. 1:29, *MB*)

Ang hirap at pagdurusang dinaranas ng isang kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo* sa mundong ito ay hindi tulad ng dinaranas ng mga tao ng sanlibutan. Ang tiisin ng mga tao ng sanlibutan ay hindi lamang sa mundong ito, sapagkat pagdating ng Araw ng Paghuhukom ay malilipol sila sa pamamagitan ng apoy (II Ped. 3:10) at nakatakda pang parusahan sa dagat-dagatang apoy na doo'y walang hanggang pagdurusa ang daranasin nila (Apoc. 21:8). Ibang-iba ito sa tiyak na kahahantungan ng mga kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo* na nakapanindigan at nakapagtiis hanggang sa wakas. Sapagkat tinitiyak ng Biblia na sila'y magiging mapalad dahil may hangganan ang kanilang pagpapagal:

"At narinig ko ang isang tinig mula sa langit na nagsasabi, 'Isulat mo ito: Mula ngayon, mapapalad ang naglilingkod sa Panginoon hanggang kamatayan!' 'Tunay nga,' sabi ng Espiritu. 'Magpapahinga na sila sa kanilang pagpapagal; sapagkat susundan sila ng kanilang mga gawa.' ... Kaya't kailangang magpakatatag ang mga hinirang ng Diyos, ang mga sumusunod sa utos ng Diyos at nananatili sa pananalig kay Jesus." (Apoc. 14:13, 12, *Ibid.*)

Sa Bayang Banal na pangako sa kanila ng Diyos matatamasa ng mga hinirang ang kapahingahang ipinangako (Apoc. 21:1-4, *Ibid.*).

Kaya ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ang lunas sa pagdurusa at kahirapan ng tao sa mundong ito. Dahil ang nasa loob ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* at ang makapananatili rito hanggang kamatayan ang tiyak na makapapasok sa Bayang Banal—na doon ay hindi na mararanasan pa ang mga hirap, dusa, at kadalamhatiang nararanasan sa mundong ito. ●

Ang hirap at dusa na dinaranas ng tao ay bunga ng pagkahiwalay niya sa Diyos. Upang makalaya ang tao sa sumpang dinaranas niya dahil sa kasalanan, mahalagang makabilang siya sa mga tinubos ni Cristo.

Ang isang bagay na mahalaga ay nilalagyan ng tanda o tatak na pagkakakilanlan. Gayon din ang tao. Upang magkaroon ng pagkakakilanlan na siya'y pag-aari na ng Diyos ay tinatatakan ng Espiritu Santo. Samakatuwid, ang gawaing pagtatatak na hinuhulaan ay pangangaral ng dalisay na ebanghelyo. Nakatitiyak tayo na ang sugo o anghel na hinuhulaan sa Apocalipsis 7:2-3, ay tumutukoy sa anghel na tao sapagkat ang gawain at pangangaral ng ebanghelyo ay hindi sa anghel na espiritu.

Bakit kinakailangang ang tao ay matatakan ng Espiritu Santo? Sapagkat ang mga tao ay nagpakaligaw (Mal. 3:7), nahiwalay (Isa. 59:2), at naging kaaway ng Diyos (Col. 1:21). Sa kalagayang ito ng tao kailangan niyang magbalik-loob o makipagkasundo sa Diyos. Sa mga sugo ipinagkatiwala ang pangangasiwa ng pakikipagkasundo ng tao sa Diyos (II Cor. 5:20). Sila ang may karapatang mangaral ng dalisay na ebanghelyo (Roma 10:15). Ang sumampalataya sa pangangaral ng mga sugo ay tinatatakan ng Espiritu Santo bilang patunay na hindi na sila kaaway kundi sariling pag-aari na sila ng Diyos (Efe. 1:13-14). Ito ang gawaing ginampanan ng kapatid na Felix Manalo na katuparan ng Sugo ng Diyos na hinuhulaan sa Apocalipsis 7:2-3.

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Ang kahulugan ng mga nagaganap ngayon

By ARVIN T. GALANG

ARAW-ARAW AY dumaranas ng kahirapan at pagdurusa ang tao sa mundong ito dahil sa mga sunod-sunod na kalamidad, paglalabanan sa mga pinag-aagawang teritoryo ng mga bansa, at pagbagsak ng pandaigdigang ekonomiya. Bagama't sinisikap ng tao na malunasan ang sapin-saping suliranin ng kaniyang pamumuhay ngayon sa mundo, siya ay bigo pa rin. Madalas na naitatanong tuloy ng marami: "Bakit nangyayari ang lahat ng ito?"

Ang kahulugan ng pagdurusa ng tao

Ang hirap at dusa na dinaranas ng tao ay bunga ng pagkahiwalay niya sa Diyos:

"Kung magkagayon, magagalit ako sa kanila. Itatakwil ko sila't tatalikdan, at sila'y madaling mabibihag ng kaaway. Masusuong sila sa mga kaguluhan at kapahamakan hanggang sa mapag-isip-isip nilang ito'y dahil sa akong Diyos nila ay hindi nila kasama." (Deut. 31:17, *Magandang Balita Biblia*)

Hindi ganito ang panukala ng Diyos buhat pa nang pasimula—ang tao ay nilikha ng Diyos sa kabutihan:

"Ito lamang ang natitiyak ko: ang tao'y nilikha ng Diyos sa kabutihan, ngunit ang tao'y nag-iisip ng kung anu-anong bagay." (Ecles. 7:29, *Ibid.*)

Hindi dapat sisihin ang Diyos sa dinaranas na kahirapan. Ang tao ang nag-isip at gumawa ng di naaayon sa panukala ng Diyos at sa maraming pagkakataon ay nilalabag pa ang Kaniyang aral. Kaya't sa halip na

"Anghel: ang anghel na tagatanod ng iglesya, ... (at ito ang talong karaniwang pakahulugan, ang Obispo ng iglesia." (*Ang Bagong Tipan ng Ating Mananakop at Panginoong Jesucristo*, p. 753)

"*Angel* (*Heb. Mal'ak*; *Gr. angelos*, *both meaning 'messenger'*). *In some cases the word is applied to human beings* (Mal. 2:7; Rev. 1:20) ..." (*The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, p. 61)

Pinatutunayan din ito ng mga iskolar sa Biblia (*Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament*, p. 8).

Samakatuwid, ang anghel na hinuhulaan sa Apocalipsis 7:2-3 ay tumutukoy sa sugo ng Diyos.

Ang dakong pagmumulan ng sugong hinuhulaan

Ang sugo o anghel na hinuhulaan sa Apocalipsis 7:2 ay nakitang umaakyat sa sikatan ng araw. Ang sikatan ng araw ay tumutukoy sa silangan o *east* sa ibang salin ng Biblia:

"*And I saw another angel ascending from the east ...*" (Rev. 7:2, *King James Version*)

Ang salitang "*east*" na mababasa sa Apocalipsis 7:2 ang matatagpuan sa saling *King James Version*. Ang salitang "*east*" ang katumbas ng wikang Griego na "*anatole*." At ang salitang Griego na "*anatole*" kapag sinamahan ng salitang Griego na "*helios*", ito ay isinasalin na sikatan ng araw gaya ng matutunghan sa Apocalipsis 7:3 sa saling Pilipino.

Nang isalin ang Bagong Tipan sa wikang Hebreo ang salitang "*anatole helios*" ay isinaling "*mizrach shemesh*." Ang salitang Hebreo na "*mizrach*" ay ginamit sa malayong silangan: "*... on the other hand mizrach is used of the far east with a less definite signification* (Isa. 42:2, 25; 43:5; 46:11)." (*Smith's Bible Dictionary*, p. 154).

Samakatuwid ang sugong hinuhulaan sa Apocalipsis 7:2 ay magmumula sa Malayong Silangan. Ang isa sa mga bansa na nasa malayong silangan ay ang bansang Pilipinas. Dito magmumula ang anghel o sugo na magtataguyod ng Gawain ng Diyos sa mga huling araw.

Ang panahon na nakitang umaakyat sa sikatan ng araw

Kung susuriin natin ang hula, hindi lamang ang dako na pagmumulan ng sugo na hinuhulaan ang tinitiyak sa atin, kundi pati ang panahong nakita ang kaniyang pag-akyat. Sipiin natin mula sa talatang uno hanggang tres ng Apocalipsis:

"At pagkatapos nito ay nakita ko ang apat na anghel na nakatayo sa apat na sulok ng lupa, na pinipigil ang apat na hangin ng lupa, upang huwag humihip ang hangin sa lupa, o sa dagat man, o sa anomang punong kahoy. At nakita ko ang ibang anghel na umaakyat mula sa sikatan ng araw, na taglay ang tatak ng Dios na buhay: at siya'y sumigaw ng tinig na malakas sa apat na anghel na pinagkaloobang maipahamak ang lupa at ang dagat, Na nagsasabi, Huwag ninyong ipahamak ang lupa, kahit ang dagat, kahit ang mga punong kahoy, hanggang sa aming matatakan sa kanilang mga noo ang mga alipin ng ating Dios." (Apoc. 7:1-3)

Kailan ang panahong nakita ang ibang anghel o sugo ng Diyos na umaakyat sa sikatan ng araw? Kasabay ng pagpigil ng apat na anghel sa apat na hangin ng lupa. Ang hangin ay sumisimbulo sa digmaan.

"*Four Winds.—Winds in the Bible symbolize political commotion, strife, and war* (Daniel 7:2; Jeremiah 25:32)" (*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 416).

Ang apat na hangin o digmaan na pinipigil ng apat na anghel ay tumutukoy sa Unang Digmaang Pansanlibutan:

"*Then came in the early part of the present century the devastating World War I when the four winds were permited to blow over much of the world*" (*Ibid.*, p. 425).

November 11, 1918 napigil ang hangin o ang Unang Digmaang Pandaigdig:

"*On November 11, 1918, the four angels stopped the winds of strife, and a war-sick world, distraught by the terror of four years of blood and carnage, rejoiced once more in apparent peace and safety.*" (*Ibid.*, p. 425)

Noon ding 1918 nakita ang umaakyat na gawain ng sugong hinuhulaan.

Tiniyak sa atin na taglay ng anghel o sugo ang tatak ng Diyos na buhay. Sapagkat **ang gawain ng sugong ito ay tatakan ang mga alipin ng Diyos**.

Ang tatak ng Diyos ay Espiritu Santo. Ito ay itinatatak sa tao kapag sumampalataya sa ebanghelyo ng katotohanan na ipinangangaral ng mga sugo ng Diyos: "Na sa kaniya'y kayo rin naman, pagkarinig ng aral ng katotohanan, ng evangelio ng inyong kaligtasan,—na sa kaniya rin naman, mula nang kayo'y magsisampalataya, ay kayo'y tinatakan ng Espiritu Santo, na ipinangako" (Efe. 1:13).

Samakatuwid, ang gawaing pagtatatak na hinuhulaan ay pangangaral ng dalisay na ebanghelyo ng mga sugo ng Diyos. Ang mga sumampalataya sa pangangaral ng mga sugo ng Diyos ang tinatatakan ng Espiritu Santo. Hindi matatanggap ang Espiritu Santo kung hindi dalisay na ebanghelyo ang sinampalatayanan. At hindi maipangangaral ang dalisay na ebanghelyo kung hindi sugo ng Diyos ang mangangaral. Kaya natitiyak natin na ang gawain ng anghel o sugo na umaakyat sa sikatan ng araw ay pangangaral ng dalisay na Ebanghelyo. Ang sumampalataya sa pangangaral ng sugong hinuhulaan ay tinatatakan ng Espiritu Santo.

Ang pagsusugo ng Diyos

By GREG F. NONATO

ANG SINUGO NG DIYOS ay hindi inihalal ang kaniyang sarili (*self appointed*). Kung susuriin natin maging noong unang panahon ay maraming mga tagapangaral na nagpanggap na sila ay propeta ngunit ang totoo ay hindi sila sinugo ng Diyos kundi inihalal lamang ang kanilang mga sarili. Ganito ang sinasabi ng Biblia:

"Nang magkagayo'y sinabi ng Panginoon sa akin, Ang mga propeta ay nanghuhula ng kasinungalingan sa aking pangalan; hindi ko sila sinugo, o inutusan ko man sila, o nagsalita man ako sa kanila: sila'y nanganghuhula sa iyo ng sinungaling na pangitain, at ng panghuhula, at ng bagay na wala, at ng daya ng kanilang sariling puso." (Jer. 14:14)

Dahil dito, si Apostol Pablo ay nagbabala sa mga Cristiano na ang pagiging sugo gaya ni Aaron ay hindi *self-appointment*, kailangang tinawag siya ng Diyos:

"At sinoman ay hindi tumatanggap sa kaniyang sarili ng karangalang ito, liban na kung tawagin siya ng Dios, na gaya ni Aaron." (Heb. 5:4)

Ang pagtiyak sa mga sinugo

"At kayo'y walang salita niya na nananatili sa inyo: sapagka't hindi kayo nagsisisampalataya sa kaniyang sinugo. Saliksikin ninyo ang mga kasulatan, sapagka't iniisip ninyo na sa mga yaon ay mayroon kayong buhay na walang hanggan; at ang mga ito'y siyang nangagpapatotoo tungkol sa akin." (Juan 5:38-39)

Tiniyak ng ating Panginoong Jesucristo na ang mga kasulatan ang nagpapatotoo tungkol sa Kaniyang pagiging sinugo. Ang mga kasulatan sa panahon ng ating Panginoong Jesucristo ay tumutukoy sa mga aklat ng Matandang Tipan, sapagka't noon ay hindi pa naisulat ang Bagong Tipan.

Ang isa sa mga kasulatan na tumitiyak na si Cristo ay sinugo ng Diyos ay ang isinulat ni Moises (Juan 5:46).

Sa hulang isinulat ni Moises ay sinasabing "palilitawin" o isusugo ng Diyos ang isang propeta na katulad niya. Ang propeta na hinuhulaan ay natupad sa ating Panginoong Jesucristo, kung kaya't sinabi Niya na "ang kasulatan ang nagpapatotoo tungkol sa akin."

Samakatuwid ang ikatitiyak na ang isang tagapangaral ay sinugo ng Diyos at hindi *self-appointed* ay dapat na hinuhulaan sa Biblia ang kaniyang pangangaral tulad ng Panginoong Jesucristo. Sinomang nag-aangkin na siya ay sugo ng Diyos ngunit hindi hinulaan sa Biblia ay hindi tunay na sugo ng Diyos.

Ang Sugo ng Diyos sa mga huling araw

"At nakita ko ang ibang anghel na umaakyat mula sa sikatan ng araw, na taglay ang tatak ng Dios na buhay: at siya'y sumigaw ng tinig na malakas sa apat na anghel na pinagkaloobang maipahamak ang lupa at ang dagat. Na nagsasabi, Huwag ninyong ipahamak ang lupa, kahit ang dagat, kahit ang mga punong kahoy, hanggang sa aming matatakan sa kanilang mga noo ang mga alipin ng ating Dios." (Apoc. 7:2-3)

Sa talata o hulang sinipi natin ay binanggit ang anghel na umaakyat mula sa sikatan ng araw. **Ang salitang anghel ay hindi tumutukoy sa kalagayan kundi sa tungkulin.** Ganito ang isinasaad sa *New Catholic Encyclopedia*:

"The word angel ultimately is derived from the Greek angelos, which is the translation of Hebrew mal'ak, messenger. The primary significance of angel, therefore, is messenger from God, a significance describing function rather than being or nature" (p. 506).

Ganito rin ang paniniwala ng mga Protestante (*Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies*, p. 13) at ng mga Saksi ni Jehovah (*The Emphatic Diaglott*, p. 872).

Ang kahulugan ng salitang anghel ay sinugo

Kung kaya't ang salitang ito ay maaaring itawag sa nasa kalagayang espiritu tulad ni Gabriel (Lucas 1:19) o nasa kalagayang tao kung sila ay sinugo ng Panginoong Diyos. Ganito rin ang paniniwala ng paring si Juan Trinidad:

sa Iglesia ay inilagay ng Diyos sa balikat ng Kapatid na Eduardo ang pamamahala sa Iglesia. Isang bihasa at makaranasang lider, pinasimulan ni Kapatid na Eduardo ang walang kapagurang pagdalaw sa mga lokal ng Iglesia sa iba't ibang panig ng daigdig. Sa maikling panahon, sa pamamagitan ng kaniyang makapangyarihan at mabisang pangunguna, at higit sa lahat ay sa tulong ng Diyos na Makapangyarihan sa lahat, ay lubhang dumami ang naitatag na mga lokal at mga distrito eklesiastiko, libu-libo ang naordenahang mga bagong ministro, at libu-libo rin ang nahikayat na mag-aral sa pagkaministro. Pinaigting niya ang pagpapatayo ng mga gusaling sambahan sa Pilipinas, gayundin ang pagtatayo at pagbili ng maraming mga gusali sa labas ng Pilipinas upang doon ay may magamit na mga dako ng pagsamba. Marami pang malalaking gusali ang ipinagawa, subalit ang isang tiyak na hindi maililingid sa mata ng daigdig ay ang pinakamalaking *dome arena* sa buong mundo sa ngayon—ang *Philippine Arena* na magiging dako ng pagdiriwang para sa Sentenaryo ng Iglesia at ng malalaki pang gawain nito sa hinaharap.

Tunay na mayroon pa ring mga pag-uusig. Hindi mawawala ang mga taong namumuhi at nagsasalita ng masama laban sa Iglesia dahil sa mga doktrina nito at nagniningning na mga tagumpay. Subalit ngayon ay kapansin-pansin na hindi lamang ang mga mababaha ang katayuan sa lipunan, kundi maging ang mga matataas at makapangyarihan, ay nagpapahayag ng kanilang paghanga, at pagkamangha sa matinding tagumpay ng Iglesia. Nakikita nila ang maraming tagumpay nito hindi lamang sa larangan ng pagtatayo ng mga gusali kundi gayundin sa gawaing pagpapalaganap ng ebanghelyo na nakaakit na sa Iglesia nang daan-daang libong tao na mula sa iba't ibang lahi. Hindi malirip ng kanilang isipan kung paanong patuloy na bumibili ang Iglesia ng mga *real properties* sa labas ng Pilipinas habang ipinagbibili naman ng ibang mga iglesia ang sa kanila, at ito ay nagaganap sa panahong ang buong daigdig ay pasuray-suray na dahil sa matindi at hindi malunasang pagbagsak ng ekonomiya. Saksi rin sila sa malalaking gawaing pansibiko ng Iglesia na nakatulong na sa milyun-milyong tao na ang ilan pa nga ay naitala bilang mga *world records*.

Marami pa rin ang naniniwala at nagsasabi na ang mga tagumpay ng Iglesia mula sa panahong nabubuhay si Kapatid na Felix Manalo hanggang sa kasalukuyan ay isa lamang na maituturing na "swerte" at hindi raw mga gawa ng Diyos. Ito ang dahilan kaya marami pa rin ang ayaw umanib sa Iglesia, at mayroon pa ngang ayaw isuko ang kanilang hangarin na pabagsakin ang gawaing ito. Gayunpaman, idinadalangin ng Iglesia sa Diyos na kaawaan Niya na ang mga taong ito ay mapabilang sa mga "makakita at makaalam, at makagunita, at makatalos na magkakasama, na ginawa ito ng kamay ng Panginoon" (Isa. 41:20). Matuto sana sila sa "isang Fariseo, na nagngangalang Gamaliel, doktor sa kautusan, na pinapupurihan ng buong bayan," na nagsabi sa mga taong galit na galit na kumakalaban sa mga apostol na, "pabayaan ninyo sila: sapagka't kung ang pasiyang ito, o ang gawang ito ay sa mga tao, ay mawawasak: Datapuwa't kung sa Dios, ay hindi ninyo maiwawasak; baka pa kayo'y mangasumpungan na nangakikipaghamok laban sa Dios" (Gawa 5:34, 38-39). Tunay na tinupad ng Diyos ang Kaniyang mga pangako sa Kaniyang Sugo mula sa mga wakas ng lupa na Kaniya siyang tutulungan sa harap ng maraming mga kumakaaway:

"Narito, silang lahat na nangagagalit sa iyo ay mangapapahiya at mangalilito: silang nangakikipaglaban sa iyo ay papanaw at mangapapahamak. Iyong hahanapin sila, at hindi mo mangasusumpungan, sa makatuwid baga'y silang nangakikipaglaban sa iyo: silang nakikipagdigma laban sa iyo ay papanaw, at gaya ng bagay ng wala. Sapagka't akong Panginoon mong Dios, ay hahawak ng iyong kanang kamay, na magsasabi sa iyo, Huwag kang matakot; aking tutulungan ka" (Isa. 41:11-13).

Isang siglo ang nagdaan sa kasaysayan ng Iglesia na puno ng magagandang alaala. Bawat taon ay tunay na *milestone* dahil sa masaganang mga pagpapalang espirituwal at materyal na ipinagkaloob ng Diyos sa Iglesia. Lahat ng mga ito ay nagsisilbing patotoo at saksi sa walang kupas Niyang pag-ibig at sa katotohanan na ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ay tunay na sa Kaniya, at ito ang may pangakong kaligtasan. Kaya nga, sundin natin ang payo ng mga apostol sa Iglesia:

"Kaya't yamang nakukubkob tayo ng makapal na bilang ng mga saksi, itabi namang walang liwag ang bawa't pasan, at ang pagkakasalang pumipigil sa atin, at ating takbuhing may pagtitiis ang takbuhing inilagay sa harapan natin." (Heb. 12:1)

Wala kahit isa sa atin na nakakaalam kung kailan natin matatapos ang ating takbuhin, o kung hanggang kailan mamamalagi ang mundong ito, subalit isang bagay ang ating nalalaman at natitiyak—ang Diyos na karapat-dapat sa lahat ng kapurihan at pasasalamat ay umaasa na ating tatakbuhing may pagtitiis at determinasyon ang huling nalalabing bahagi ng ating takbuhin.

ISAIAS T. SAMSON JR.
Punong Patnugot

makahahadlang Sa aking ginagawa." (Isa. 43:13, *Magandang Balita Biblia*)

Tunay na napakarami ang hindi tumigil sa paghadlang sa gawaing itiniwala ng Diyos sa Kaniyang Sugo sa mga huling araw. Ang mga makapangyarihan at maimpluwensiyang mga kumalaban sa Iglesia ay masigasig na gumamit ng lahat ng pamamaraan upang ito ay wasakin. Hindi malilimot ng mga unang kaanib sa Iglesia na inabot ang maluwalhating kalagayan ngayon ng Iglesia, ang mga taon na ginugulo ng mga mang-uusig ang kanilang mga gawaing pagpapalaganap at ang lalong masama, pati ang kanilang mga pagsamba. Saan man sila magtungo ay hindi nasisiyahan ang mga mang-uusig na sila ay kutyain lamang, sa halip, sa maraming pagkakataon ay nagiging marahas ang mga ito sa paraang pinupukol sila ng mga bato at iba pang matitigas na bagay, at pati ng dumi ng tao. Gayunpaman, kahit bahagya ay hindi ito nakasira sa kanilang pananampalataya. Hanggang ngayon, walang mababakas sa kanilang mga mukha na pagsisisi, ni bahagya mang panunumbat sa Diyos kung bakit ipinahintulot Niya na sila'y magdaan sa ganoong mga pagsubok. Itinuring nila na pagpapala ang kanilang mabibigat na pinagdaanan sapagkat kapag kanilang nililingon ang nakaraan ay lalo nilang nakikita at naipagpapasalamat sa Diyos ang kasalukuyan—ang maluwalhating katayuan ng Iglesia. Ang kanilang pananampalataya ay lalong pinalakas ng katuparan ng mga pangako ng Diyos sa Kaniyang Sugo at sa Iglesia na mula sa mga wakas ng lupa:

"Ikaw na aking hinawakan mula sa mga wakas ng lupa, at tinawag kita mula sa mga sulok niyaon, at pinagsabihan kita, Ikaw ay aking lingkod, aking pinili ka at hindi kita itinakuwil; Huwag kang matakot, sapagka't ako'y sumasaiyo; huwag kang manglupaypay, sapagka't ako'y iyong Dios; aking palalakasin ka; oo, aking tutulungan ka; oo, aking aalalayan ka ng kanang kamay ng aking katuwiran." (Isa. 41:9-10)

Ang mga kaanib na nasa iba't ibang dako sa labas ng Pilipinas, lalo na ang mga naunang kaanib sa Kanlurang bahagi ng daigdig, ay tunay na maraming dahilan upang kilalanin ang masaganang pagpapala ng Diyos. Naranasan nila hindi lamang ang katuparan ng hula ng Diyos na pagtawag sa Kaniyang mga anak mula sa Malayong Silangan kundi sila mismo ang naging saksi sa katuparan ng hula ng Diyos na titipunin Niya ang Kaniyang mga anak mula sa Malayong Kanluran:

"Mula sa malayong silangan ay dadalhin ko ang iyong lahi, at mula sa malayong kanluran ay titipunin kita." (Isa. 43:5, isinalin mula sa *Moffatt Translation*)

Ayon sa *World Almanac*, ang Malayong Kanluran ay ang "California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii …" na pawang mga estado ng Amerika. Nagsimulang matupad ang hulang ito noong ika-27 ng Hulyo 1968, nang ang mga kaanib mula sa Pilipinas na nangibang-bayan sa Hawaii ay natipon sa isang napakaespirituwal na pagsamba na pinangasiwaan ng Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan noon ng Iglesia na si Kapatid na Eraño G. Manalo. Bahagi pa rin ng katuparan ng hula, agad na nagtungo si Kapatid na Eraño sa San Francisco, California upang pangasiwaan ang isa pang pagsamba ng nagkakatipong mga kapatid mula sa nasabing estado. Ang "Gawaing Pagtitipon" ay naganap nang ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, pagkatapos ng kaniyang mabibigat na pinagdaanan, ay nakarating sa kaniyang maluwalhating kalalagayan:

"hanggang sa malayong kanluran katatakutan ng mga tao ang Walang Hanggang Panginoon, at sa silangan makikita nila ang kaniyang mga kamanghamanghang gawa; sapagkat ang kaniyang paghihiganti ay darating na parang bugso ng tubig na pinayaon ng napakalakas na hangin." (Isa. 59:19, *Ibid.*)

Ang paglaganap ng Iglesia sa Malayong Kanluran ay naging simula ng lalong malawak at pambuong daigdig na gawain ukol sa pagliligtas upang maitatag ang marami pang mga lokal at mga distrito ng Iglesia sa halos 100 mga bansa at teritoryo na ang mga kaanib ay mula sa 123 lahi—katuparan ng mga salita ng ating Panginoong Jesucristo:

"At ipangangaral ang evangeliong ito ng kaharian sa buong sanglibutan sa pagpapatotoo sa lahat ng mga bansa; at kung magkagayo'y darating ang wakas." (Mat. 24:14)

Ang higit sa lahat na laging magugunita sa mga gawaing ito ay ang pagkakatatag sa mga lokal ng Roma, sa Italya, noong ika-27 ng Hulyo 1994, na sumasagisag sa pagbabalik ng Iglesia sa Roma; sa Jerusalem, sa Israel noong ika-31 ng Marso 1996, na sumasagisag sa pagbabalik ng Iglesia sa dati nitong tahanan; at sa Atenas, sa Gresya noong ika-10 ng Mayo 1997, na sumasagisag sa pagpapatuloy ng gawain sa dako ng mga Gentil. Lahat ng mga itinakda ng Diyos na mga makasaysayang pangyayaring ito ay naganap sa panahon ng Pamamahala ni Kapatid na Eraño G. Manalo.

Isa pang napakahalagang *milestone* sa Iglesia ay ang paghahalal kay Kapatid na Eduardo V. Manalo noong ika-6 ng Mayo, 1994 bilang Pangalawang Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan ng Iglesia. Pagkaraan ng labinlimang taon at tatlong buwan pagkamatay ng kaniyang ama, ang kapatid na Eraño noong ika-31 ng Agosto 2009, sa edad na 84, pagkatapos ng kaniyang mahigit na 46 na taong tapat na pangunguna

100 taon ng pagpapala ng Diyos sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*

SANDAANG TAON, hindi lamang mga taong lumipas, na wala ni isang karaniwang taon, sa halip, bawat taon ay mahalaga, tunay na puno ng pagpapala. Ngayon, karamihan sa mga kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ay mga ipinanganak o naakit sa Iglesia sa panahong ito ay nasa maluwalhating kalagayan na. Para sa kanila, ang makita ang Iglesia sa kasalukuyang kalagayan ay sapat nang dahilan upang magdiwang at magpasalamat sa Diyos.

Tama sila, subalit upang lubos na mapahalagahan ang kasalukuyan at ganap na maunawaan kung gaano talaga kadakila ang mga gawa ng Diyos, ay nararapat na alalahanin natin ang nakalipas—ang panahon na ang Sugo ng Diyos sa mga huling araw, ang Kapatid na Felix Y. Manalo, ay nagsimulang mangaral ng mga dalisay na salita ng Diyos at ang panahon ng pagpapasimula ng Iglesia na punung-puno ng mga pagsubok. Ang ilan sa mga ito ay ang kakulangan sa pondo at mga taong tutulong na karaniwang suliranin ng mga nagsisimulang organisasyon; matitinding pag-uusig mula sa kung tawagin ay mga relihiyosong tao na itinuturing na katitisuran ang mga doktrina ng Iglesia dahil sa ang mga ito ay kaibayo ng kanilang mga aral; mga banta ng pagkakabaha-bahaging dulot ng mga "hindi tunay na kapatid na ipinasok nang lihim" sa Iglesia, at maging ng ilang pumasok sa ministeryo na "hindi nagsisipaglingkod sa Cristong Panginoon, kundi sa kanilang sariling tiyan" (Gal. 2:4; Filip. 3:19; Roma 16:18). Ang Ikalawang Digmaang Pansanlibutan na sinundan ng mga paghihimagsik laban sa Pamahalaan ng Pilipinas ay nagkaroon din ng bahagi sa bigong paghadlang sa mga gawain ng Iglesia, bagamat ang mga ito ay naging sanhi ng kamatayan ng di iilang mga ministro, mga manggagawa, mga maytungkulin, at mga kaanib sa Iglesia dahil sa pagtupad ng tungkulin. Lahat ng mga pangyayaring nabanggit ay itinuturing ng mga nasa labas ng Iglesia na mga "pagbagsak" o "masasamang panahon" sa kasaysayan ng Iglesia, gayunpaman ay maling-mali sila. Lahat ng mga taon at mga pangyayaring lumipas ay itinuturing ng bayan ng Diyos sa mga huling araw na ito, na pawang mga taon ng pagpapala. Papaano maituturing ang mga yaon na mga taon ng pagpapala?

Itinulot ng Diyos na ang Kaniyang bayan sa mga huling araw na ito ay magdaan sa mga taon ng pag-uusig, mga hadlang, at mga pagsubok, upang Kaniyang maihayag at mabigyang-diin ang katuparan ng Kaniyang mga pangako sa Kaniyang Sugo at sa gawaing itiniwala Niya sa kaniya, at upang patunayan na walang anuman o sinomang makahahadlang sa Kaniyang gawain:

"Ako ang Diyos, Sa mula't mula pa, Ang nasa kamay ko'y Hindi makukuha ng sinuman; At walang

な聖書の教えは、「信仰だけを持てば十分だ」という、とても有名な信条に反して、自分たちにとって大多数が納得するであろうことを選ぶ人々と、自分たちにとって都合のよいことを選ぶ人々によって、無視され、拒否されている。しかし、彼らが知らないのは、この「信仰だけを持てば十分だ」もしくは「ただキリストを個人的な救い主と受け入れればよい」という信条は、神が人をお救いになるための偉大な計画に(エフェソ2:3-10)反するだけでなく、悲惨な終わり—罪人の裁きの日の破滅(箴言11:31; Iコリント6:9-10; IIペトロ3:7, 10)、そして、火の池での永遠の罰(黙示録21:8)を人にもたらすということだ。

この終わりの時代のキリストの教会は(ヨハネ10:16; 使徒20:28 Lamsa訳; ローマ9:24; イザヤ43:5 Moffatt訳)、救い主キリスト御自身の命令を果たすように委ねられている:

...「全世界に出て行きなさい。すべての人々に、このすばらしい知らせを宣べ伝えるのです。信じて、バプテスマ(洗礼)を受ける者は救われます。しかし、信じない者は、罪に定められます。(マルコ16:15-16 JLB)

弟子たちが従った私たちの主イエス・キリストのこの指示は、神の御心を果たすことが目的である:

神は、その独り子をお与えになったほどに、世を愛された。独り子を信じる者が一人も滅びないで、永遠の命を得るためである。(ヨハネ3:16)

全ての人、全ての場所に、人の救いのための神のすばらしい知らせを宣べ伝えるという、キリストが命令された神の御心は、キリストの教会が総力をあげて、世界全体で豊かな実を結ぶ運動の目的を気付かせるインスピレーションになっている。

人の最も深刻な問題

私たちの主イエス・キリストが誕生したもっと昔に、神が人を造られた目的は旧約聖書にてはっきりと示されている:

すべてに耳を傾けて得た結論。「神を畏れ、その戒めを守れ。」これこそ、人間のすべて。神は、善をも悪をも一切の業を、隠れたこともすべて裁きの座に引き出されるであろう。(伝道者12:13-14)

知恵に富んだソロモン王は、全ての人が理解し、熟考しなくてはならない、とても重要な真理を宣べた。ソロモン王自身がこの真理に気づいたのは、人がこの世の全てのもの—知識、富、力、名誉そして名声(伝道者2章から3章まで)—を手に入れてたとしても、神が人を創造された目的を果たさなければ、全ては無意味なのだということがわかったときだ。というのは、人は自分の死のとき、自身に裁きを下される神に、自分が行ったことに関して、釈明の義務があるからだ。

神の人への第一の命令は、神を最も愛すること、すなわち、唯一のまことの神を知り(ヨハネ17:1, 3)、神を礼拝し、神に仕え(詩篇95:6-7; 100:2-3)、神の掟を守り(Iヨハネ2:3)、そして、正しく清い生活を送ること(エフェソ4:23-24)なのである。イエスによる神様の救いの計画を拒んだ者 (IIテサロニケ1:8 JLB)、私たちの主イエスの福音に従わない者は(IIテサロニケ1:8)、永遠の破滅という罰で苦しむことになる(IIテサロニケ1:10)。それは、火の池での死、第二の死のことである(黙示録20:14)。

この問題への唯一の解決策

神が救い主として任命された、私たちの主イエス・キリストは(使徒5:31)、はっきりと命令された:

わたしは門である。わたしを通って群れの中に入る者は誰でも救われる。...(ヨハネ10:9 REB)

救われたい人は誰でも、門である、私たちの主イエス・キリストに入らなくてはならない。

この命令に従った人は、群れ、または、キリストの血で贖われたキリストの教会であり(使徒20:28 Lamsa訳)、彼が頭として成立つ体に(コロサイ1:18)見つかり、それは、神の怒りから(ローマ5:9)、キリストがお救いになるのである(エフェソ5:23)。それゆえ、キリストの教会の外にいる人は裁かれ(Iコリント5:13)、焼かれるのである(ヨハネ15:6)。というのは、キリストに贖われない限り、彼らは自分たちの罪を払うことになるので(ヨハネ8:24)、血を流すことなしには、罪の赦しはありえないからなのである(ヘブライ9:22)。

神にふさわしい礼拝をして、人が救いを得るために、キリストの教会の、まぎれもない重要性を無視する、あらゆる信条を却下するために、キリストは、神の御心—人の救いのための慈しみと計画(エフェソ1:8-9)—であるキリストの教会は、必要不可欠だと、このように強調されている:

「わたしに向かって、『主よ、主よ』と言う者が皆、天の国に入るわけではない。わたしの天の父の御心を行う者だけが入るのである。かの日には、大勢の者がわたしに、『主よ、主よ、わたしたちは御名によって預言し、御名によって悪霊を追い出し、御名によって奇跡をいろいろ行ったではありませんか』と言うであろう。そのとき、わたしはきっぱりとこう言おう。『あなたたちのことは全然知らない。不法を働く者ども、わたしから離れ去れ。』」(マタイ7:21-23)

Translated by Kristoffer Reniel Gonzales and Shuta Uchiyama

Poiché questo è l'intero [obbligo] dell'uomo. Poiché il [vero] Dio stesso porterà in giudizio ogni sorta di opera in relazione a ogni cosa nascosta, in quanto a se è buona o cattiva." (Ecc. 12:13-14, *Traduzione del Nuovo Mondo delle Sacre Scritture*)

Il saggio Re Salomone ha dichiarato una verità davvero molto importante che ogni persona dovrebbe comprendere e sulla quale dovrebbe riflettere. Lo stesso re giunse finalmente a rendersene conto, quando scoprì la vanità in tutto ciò che l'uomo riesce ad ottenere in questo mondo—la conoscenza, la ricchezza, il potere, l'onore e la fama (Capitoli 2 fino a 3 di Ecclesiaste)—ma fallisce nel compiere il vero scopo per cui Dio lo ha creato, poiché quando morirà darà conto a Dio, il quale lo giudicherà secondo ciò che ha fatto.

Il comandamento principale di Dio per l'uomo è quello di amare Lui al di sopra di tutti, ovvero, deve riconoscerlo come l'unico vero Dio (Gio. 17:1, 3), adorarlo e servirlo (Sal. 95:6-7; 100:2-3), ubbidire ai Suoi comandamenti (1 Gi. 2:3) e vivere in modo giusto (Efe. 4:23-24). Coloro che si rifiutano di accettare il piano di Dio di salvarli attraverso Gesù (2 Te. 1:8, *LB*) e non ubbidiscono al vangelo del nostro Signore Gesù Cristo (2 Te. 1:8, *La Bibbia TOB Nuova Traduzione CEI*), subiranno la punizione dell'eterna distruzione (2 Te. 1:10, *TEV*), ovvero la seconda morte nel lago di fuoco (Apo. 20:14, *TILC*).

L'unica soluzione al più grave problema dell'uomo

Niente meno che il nostro Signore Gesù Cristo, che Dio Onnipotente ha eletto come Salvatore (Att. 5:31), ha comandato esplicitamente:

"Io sono la porta; chiunque entri nell'ovile attraverso me sarà salvo. ..." (Gio. 10:9, tradotto dal *Revised English Bible*)

Chiunque voglia essere salvato deve entrare nella porta che è nessun altro che il nostro Signore Gesù Cristo.

Coloro che hanno ubbidito questo comando si trovano nell'ovile o nel gregge che è la Chiesa Di Cristo, redenta dal sangue di Cristo (Att. 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*) ed il corpo del quale Cristo è il capo (Col. 1:18) che Lui salverà (Efe. 5:23) dall'ira di Dio (Rom. 5:9). Perciò, le persone che sono fuori dalla Chiesa Di Cristo saranno portate a giudizio (1 Co. 5:13, *Revised Standard Version*) o saranno bruciate (Gio. 15:6), poiché saranno loro quelli che pagheranno per i loro peccati (Gio. 8:24) in quanto non sono tra coloro che sono stati redenti da Cristo; e senza lo spargimento di sangue non vi è perdono (Ebr. 9:22).

Eliminando ogni credenza che non cosidera l'indiscussa importanza della Chiesa Di Cristo per rendere un'adorazione accettabile a Dio e per la salvezza dell'uomo, Cristo ha enfatizzato l'indispensabilità della Sua Chiesa che è la volontà di Dio—misericordia e piano per la salvezza dell'uomo (Efe. 1:8-9)—come ha dichiarato:

"Non tutti quelli che dicono: 'Signore, Signore!' entreranno nel regno di Dio. Vi entreranno soltanto quelli che fanno la volontà del Padre mio che è in cielo. Quando verrà il giorno del giudizio, molti mi diranno: 'Signore, Signore! Tu sai che noi abbiamo parlato a tuo nome, e invocando il tuo nome abbiamo scacciato demoni e abbiamo fatto molti miracoli'. Ma allora io dirò: Non vi ho mai conosciuti. Andate via da me, gente malvagia." (Mat. 7:21-23, *TILC*)

Translated by Gerald Barcebal, Axl Rose Mesina and Randolf Villajuan

JAPANESE

キリストの教会は まぎれもなく必要不可欠

真の神を礼拝し、神の約束である救いを受けるためには、キリストがお建てになったキリストの教会が(マタイ16:18; ルカ12:32; 使徒20:28 Lamsa訳) まぎれもなく必要不可欠だということは、情報不足または情報が全くないからか、多くの人々に知られていない。実際、この教会は、使徒たちの生きた時代に(ローマ16:16新改訳; 使徒2:47)、使徒たちによって、そして、聖書が地の果てと呼んでいる時代に(イザヤ46:5-6; マタイ24:33, 6-7)、フェリックス・マナロ兄弟によって、宣べ伝えられたのである。このとても重要

Du Christ rachetée par le sang du Christ (Ac 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*) et le corps dont la tête est le Christ (Col 1:18) pour être sauvé par Lui (Ep 5:23) de la colère de Dieu (Rm 5:9). Ainsi, les gens qui sont en dehors de l'Église Du Christ seront jugés (1 Co 5:13) ou seront brûlés (Jn 15:6), car ils seront ceux qui paieront pour leurs péchés (Jn 8:24) puisqu'ils ne sont pas parmi ceux rachetés par le Christ; et sans effusion de sang, il n'y a pas de pardon (Hé 9:22).

Rejeter toute croyance qui indiffère l'importance indisputable de l'Église Du Christ à la performance d'adoration acceptable à Dieu et le salut de l'homme, le Christ a souligné l'indispensabilité de Son Église qui est la volonté de Dieu—la grâce et le plan pour le salut de l'homme (Ep 1:8-9, *SEM*)—comme Il déclara:

"Ce ne sont pas tous ceux qui me disent 'Seigneur, Seigneur' entreront le Royaume des cieux, mais seulement ceux qui font ce que mon Père dans les cieux veut qu'ils fassent. Quand le Jour du Jugement arrive, plusieurs me diront, 'Seigneur, Seigneur! Par ton nom nous avons parlé le message de Dieu, par ton nom nous avons chassé des démons et avons fait beaucoup de miracles!' Alors je leur dirai, 'Je ne vous ai jamais connus. Retirez-vous de moi, vous qui commettez le mal!'" (Mt 7:21-23, *TEV*)

Translated by Ryland Mendoza and Daniel Alain Eor

ITALIAN

L'indiscussa indispensabilità della Chiesa Di Cristo

NON CONOSCIUTA DA MOLTI, che sia per mancanza o per totale assenza d'informazione, per quanto riguarda l'adorazione degna al vero Dio e come ottenere la della Sua promessa salvezza, la Chiesa Di Cristo fondata da Cristo (Mat. 16:18; Att. 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*) è indiscutibilmente indispensabile. Infatti, questa Chiesa è stata predicata e propagata dagli apostoli durante il loro tempo (Rom. 16:16; Att. 2:47) e dal Fratello Felix Y. Manalo nel tempo definito dalla Bibbia come estremità della terra (Isa. 43:5-6; Mat. 24:33, 6-7, *Nuova Riveduta*). Contrariamente alla credenza molto popolare secondo alla quale "la fede da sola è sufficiente", questo insegnamento biblico estremamente importante è stato ignorato o rigettato da coloro che hanno scelto di credere in ciò che, personalmente, pensano sia accettabile per la maggioranza ed in ciò che considerano conveniente per loro. Tuttavia, ciò che non sanno è che la credenza secondo alla quale "la fede da sola è sufficiente" o "basta accettare Cristo come proprio Salvatore personale" non solo si oppone al nobile piano di Dio per la salvezza dell'uomo (Efe. 2:3-10) ma sarà anche la causa della fine definitiva, più tragica e disastrosa per l'uomo—la distruzione degli uomini empi o di tutti i peccatori nel Giorno del Giudizio (Pro. 11:31; 1 Co. 6:9-10; 2 Pi. 3:7, 10) e l'eterna punizione nel lago di fuoco (Apo. 21:8, *Traduzione Interconfessionale In Lingua Corrente*).

Alla Chiesa Di Cristo in questi ultimi giorni (Gio. 10:16; Att. 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*; Rom. 9:24; Isa. 43:5, *Moffatt Translation*) è stato affidato il compito di compiere il comandamento del Salvatore stesso, il nostro Signore Gesù Cristo:

"... 'Dovete andare in tutto il mondo e predicare la buona Notizia a chiunque, dovunque. Coloro che credono e sono stati battezzati saranno salvati. Tuttavia, coloro che si rifiutano di credere saranno condannati'." (Mar. 16:15-16, Tradotto dal *Living Bible*)

Questa istruzione del nostro Signore Gesù Cristo alla quale hanno ubbidito i Suoi apostoli, ha come scopo quello di adempiere la volontà di Dio:

"«Dio ha tanto amato il mondo da dare il suo unico Figlio perché chi crede in lui non muoia ma abbia la vita eterna." (Gio. 3:16, *TILC*)

La volontà di Dio espressa nel comandamento di Cristo di predicare la Buona Notizia a chiunque e dovunque per la salvezza dell'uomo, è stata l'ispirazione dietro a tutti gli sforzi della Chiesa Di Cristo per realizzare l'obbiettivo della sua campagna mondiale di Portare Abbondante Frutto.

Il problema più grave dell'uomo

Persino molto tempo prima della nascita del nostro Signore Gesù Cristo, lo scopo di Dio nel creare l'uomo è stato rivelato chiaramente nell'Antico Testamento:

"La conclusione dell'argomento, avendo udito ogni cosa, è: Temi il [vero] Dio e osserva i suoi comandamenti.

L'indispensabilité indisputable de l'Église Du Christ

INCONNUE PAR PLUSIEURS, soit par manque d'information ou pratiquement sans information, dans la question d'adorer le vrai Dieu qui est digne de Lui et d'atteindre Son salut promis, l'Église Du Christ fondée par le Christ (Mt 16:18; Luc 12:32; Ac 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*) est incontestablement indispensable. En fait, cette Église fut prêchée et propagée par les apôtres durant leur temps (Rm 16:16; Ac 2:47) et par Frère Felix Y. Manalo au temps appelé par la Bible confins de la terre (Es 43:5-6, *Le Semeur*; Mt 24:33, 6-7, *Segond 21*). Contrairement à la croyance très populaire de la «foi seule», cet enseignement biblique extrêmement important a été ignoré ou rejeté par ceux qui choisissent de croire ce qu'ils pensent personnellement comme étant acceptable à la majorité et ce qu'ils considèrent convenable pour eux-mêmes. Mais ce qu'ils ne savent pas, pourtant, est que cette croyance «la foi seule» ou «accepte juste le Christ comme ton sauveur personnel» n'oppose pas seulement le grand plan de Dieu pour le salut de l'homme (Ep 2:3-10) mais lui causera aussi l'ultime, la plus tragique et désastreuse fin—la destruction au Jour du Jugement des hommes impies ou de tous les pécheurs (Pr 11:31; 1 Co 6:9-10; 2 P 3:7, 10) et la punition éternelle dans l'étang de feu (Ap 21:8).

L'Église Du Christ dans ces derniers jours (Jn 10:16; Ac 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*; Rm 9:24; Es 43:5, *SEM*) a été commissionnée pour accomplir le commandement du Christ, le Sauveur, Lui-même:

«Allez par tout le monde et prêchez la Bonne Nouvelle à tout le monde, partout. Ceux qui croient et sont baptisés seront sauvés. Mais ceux qui refusent de croire seront condamnés.» (Mc 16:15-16, traduit de la *Living Bible*)

Cette instruction de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ que Ses apôtres suivirent vise à accomplir la volonté de Dieu:

«En effet, Dieu a tant aimé le monde qu'il a donné son Fils unique afin que quiconque croit en lui ne périsse pas mais ait la vie éternelle.» (Jn 3:16, *SG21*)

La volonté de Dieu exprimée dans le commandement du Christ de prêcher la Bonne Nouvelle à tout le monde, partout, pour le salut de l'homme a été l'inspiration derrière les efforts collectifs de l'Église Du Christ à réaliser l'objectif de sa campagne mondiale Produire Du Fruit En Abondance.

Le plus grave problème de l'homme

Bien avant la naissance de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, le but de Dieu en créant l'homme a été fait savoir comme clairement déclaré dans l'Ancien Testament:

«Écoutons la conclusion de tout ce discours: «Crains Dieu et respecte ses commandements, car c'est ce que doit faire tout homme. En effet, Dieu amènera toute œuvre en jugement, et ce jugement portera sur tout ce qui est caché, que ce soit bon ou mauvais.» (Ec 12:13-14, *Ibid.*)

Le sage Roi Salomon déclara une très importante vérité que chaque personne devrait comprendre et y réfléchir. Le roi lui-même vint finalement à cette réalisation lorsqu'il s'aperçût de la vanité que l'homme accomplissait dans ce monde—la connaissance, la richesse, le pouvoir, l'honneur et la gloire (Chapitre 2 et 3 d'Ecclésiaste)—mais il échoue à accomplir le but précis de Dieu pourquoi Il l'a créé, car quand il meurt, il doit rendre des comptes à Dieu qui le jugera selon ce qu'il a fait.

Le plus important parmi les commandements de Dieu à l'homme est de L'aimer avant tout, qu'il devrait Le reconnaître comme le seul vrai Dieu (Jn 17:3, 1), L'adorer et Le servir (Ps 95:6-7; 100:2-3), obéir à Ses commandements (1 Jn 2:3) et mener une vie juste (Ep 4:23-24, *SEM*). Ceux qui refusent d'accepter le plan de Dieu pour les sauver par Jésus-Christ (2 Th 1:8, *Living Bible*) et qui n'obéissent pas à l'Évangile de notre Seigneur Jésus (2 Th 1:8) subiront comme punition une destruction éternelle, (2 Th 1:9 *Bible Français Courant*) laquelle est la seconde mort, la mort dans l'étang de feu (Ap 20:14).

La seule solution au plus grave problème de l'homme

Pas moins de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ que le Dieu Tout-puissant nomma pour être le Sauveur (Ac 5:31) commanda explicitement:

«Je suis la porte; toute personne qui entre dans la bergerie par moi saura sauvée. ...» (Jn 10:9, traduit de la *Revised English Bible*)

Toute personne qui veut être sauvée doit alors entrer par la porte qui n'est autre que notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ.

Ceux qui ont suivi cette commande sont trouvés dans la bergerie ou le troupeau qui est l'Église

die ewige Bestrafung im Feuersee (Offb. 21,8).

Die Kirche Christi in diesen letzten Tagen (Joh. 10,16; Apg. 20,28 *Lamsa Translation;* Röm. 9,24; Jes. 43,5 *Moffatt Translation*) ist darauf verpflichtet das Gebot Christi, dem Retter Selbst, zu erfüllen:

„... Geht in die ganze Welt und verkündet die Gute Nachricht allen Menschen! Wer zum Glauben kommt und sich taufen lässt, wird gerettet. Wer nicht glaubt, den wird Gott verurteilen." (Mk. 16,15-16 *Gute Nachricht Bibel*)

Diese Anweisung unseres Herrn Jesus Christus, welche Seine Jünger befolgten, beabsichtigt Gottes Wille:

„Gott sandte seinen Sohn nicht in die Welt, um sie zu verurteilen, sondern um sie durch Seinen Sohn zu retten." (Joh. 3,16 *Neues Leben. Die Bibel*)

Gott hat Seinen Willen für die Errettung der Menschheit durch das Gebot Christi ausgedrückt, die Gute Nachricht allen und überall zu verbreiten. Dies ist auch die Inspiration der gemeinschaftlichen Bemühungen der Kirche Christi, um das Ziel der weltweiten Reichlich Frucht darbringen (*Abundant Fruit Bearing*) Kampagne zu erreichen.

Das schwerwiegende Problem der Menschheit

Lange vor der Geburt unseres Herrn Jesus Christus wurde Gottes Absicht in der Erschaffung der Menschheit deutlich im alten Testament offenbart:

„Zu guter letzt lasst uns das Wichtigste von allem hören: Begegne Gott mit Ehrfurcht, und halte Seine Gebote! Das gilt für jeden Menschen. Denn Gott wird Gericht halten über alles, was wir tun—sei es gut oder böse—, auch wenn es jetzt noch verborgen ist." (Koh. 12,13-14 *Hoffnung für alle*)

Der weise König Salomon gab eine sehr wichtige Wahrheit bekannt, die jeder verstehen und durchdenken sollte. Der König selbst kam letztendlich zu seiner Erkenntnis, als er die Vergeblichkeit von allem herausgefunden hat, was Menschen in dieser Welt erreichen möchten—Wissen, Reichtum, Macht, Ehre und Ruhm (Kapitel 2 und 3 von Kohelet)—aber er scheiterte dabei Gottes wirkliche Absicht zu erfüllen, für die Er ihn erschuf; denn wenn er stirbt, ist er Gott verantwortlich, der ihn nach seiner Taten richten wird.

Führend unter den Geboten Gottes zu den Menschen ist es Ihn über alles andere zu lieben, das heißt, Ihn als den einzig wahren Gott anzuerkennen (Joh. 17,1;3), Ihn anzubeten und zu dienen (Ps. 95,6-7; 100,2-3), Seinen Geboten zu befolgen (1 Joh. 2,3) und der Mensch sollte in Gerechtigkeit leben (Eph. 4,23-24). Diejenigen, die sich weigern Gottes Vorhaben anzunehmen, sie durch Jesus zu retten, (2 Thess. 1,8) und das Evangelium unseres Herrn Jesus Christus nicht befolgen (2 Thess. 1,8 *NLB*), werden die Bestrafung von ewiger Zerstörung erleiden (2 Thess. 1,10, *GNB*), welcher der zweite Tod ist, der Tod im Feuersee (Offb. 20,14).

Die einzige Lösung zu dem schwerwiegenden Problem der Menschheit

Kein Geringer als unser Herr Jesus Christus, den der Allmächtige Gott als Erretter auserwählt hat (Apg. 5,31), befahl ausdrücklich:

„‚Ich allein bin die Tür. Wer durch mich zu meiner Herde kommt, der wird gerettet werden.' ..." (Joh. 10,9 *Hoffnung für alle*)

Jeder der gerettet werden möchte, muss durch die Tür hineingehen, die kein anderer als unser Herr Jesus Christus ist. Diejenigen, die dieses Gebot befolgen, sind in der Herde zu finden oder die Herde, welches die Kirche Christi ist, die unser Herr Jesus Christus mit Seinem Blut erworben hat (Apg. 20,28 *Lamsa Translation*) und der Leib, dessen Haupt Christus ist (Kol. 1,18) um von Ihm (Eph. 5,23) von dem Gericht Gottes gerettet zu werden (Röm. 5,9).

Folglich werden die, die außerhalb der Kirche Christi sind, gerichtet (1 Kor. 5,13 *Revised Standard Version*) oder verbrannt (Joh. 15,6), denn sie werden für ihre Sünden bezahlen (Joh. 8,24), da sie nicht unter denen gehören, die von Christus erlöst wurden; und ohne dass Blut vergossen wird, gibt es keine Vergebung (Hebr. 9,22).

Jeglicher Glaube sollte verworfen werden, der die unumstrittene Bedeutsamkeit der Kirche Christi vernachlässigt, welches den akzeptablen Dienst zu Gott und der Erlösung anbelangt. Christus machte die Unverzichtbarkeit Seiner Kirche deutlich, was zum Willen, der Gnade und dem Vorhaben Gottes, für die Errettung der Menschheit, gehört (Eph. 1,8-9), so wie Er es verkündete:

„Nicht alle, die zu mir sagen ‚Herr, Herr', werden in Gottes neue Welt kommen, sondern nur die, die auch tun, was mein Vater im Himmel will. Am Tag des Gerichts werden viele zu mir sagen: ‚Herr, Herr! In deinem Namen haben wir prophetische Weisungen verkündet, in deinem Namen haben wir böse Geister ausgetrieben und viele Wunder getan. 'Und trotzdem werde ich das Urteil sprechen:' "Ich habe euch nie gekannt. Ihr habt versäumt, nach Gottes Willen zu leben; geht mir aus den Augen!'" (Mt. 7,21-23 *Gute Nachricht Bibel*)

Translated by Jed Caalim and Kevin Luth Heitmann

Salvador (Hch. 5:31), mandó explícitamente:

"Yo soy la puerta; el que entre en el redil por mí será salvo. ..." (Jn. 10:9, traducido de *Revised English Bible*)

El que quiera ser salvo entonces debe entrar por la puerta que no es ningún otro que nuestro Señor Jesucristo.

Los que obedecieron este mandamiento se encuentran en el redil o rebaño que es la Iglesia De Cristo redimida por la sangre de Cristo (Hch. 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*) y el cuerpo cuya cabeza es Cristo (Col. 1:18) que será salvada por Él (Efe. 5:23) de la ira de Dios (Rom. 5:9).

Por tanto, la gente que está fuera de la Iglesia De Cristo será juzgada (1 Cor. 5:13) o será quemada (Jn. 15:6), porque ellos mismos serán los que pagarán por sus pecados (Jn. 8:24) ya que no están incluidos entre los que fueron redimidos por Cristo; y sin la redención no hay perdón (Heb. 9:22)

"Pues Dios amó tanto al mundo, que dio a su Hijo único, para que todo aquel que cree en él no muera, sino que tenga vida eterna"

- Jn. 3:16, *Nueva Versión Internacional*

Rechazando cualquier creencia que ignora la indiscutible indispensabilidad de la Iglesia De Cristo para rendir una adoración agradable a Dios y para la salvación del hombre, Cristo enfatizó la necesidad de Su Iglesia la cuál es la voluntad de Dios—la gracia y el plan para la salvación del hombre (Efe. 1:8-9)—tal como declaró:

"No todos los que me dicen: 'Señor, Señor', entrarán en el reino de los cielos, sino solamente los que hacen la voluntad de mi Padre celestial. Aquel día muchos me dirán: 'Señor, Señor, nosotros comunicamos mensajes en tu nombre, y en tu nombre expulsamos demonios, y en tu nombre hicimos muchos milagros.' Pero entonces les contestaré: 'Nunca los conocí; ¡aléjense de mí, malhechores!'" (Mat. 7:21-23, *Dios Habla Hoy*)

Translated by Christian Tantay and Ben Mark Enriquez

GERMAN

Die unbestrittene Notwendigkeit der Kirche Christi

NICHT VIELEN IST ES BEKANNT, entweder aufgrund von mangelnder Informationen oder überhaupt gar keiner Informationen, in Angelegenheiten des wahren würdigen Dienstes zum wahren Gott und Seine versprochene Erlösung zu erhalten, dass die von Christus gegründetete Kirche, die Kirche Christi (Mt. 16,18; Lk. 12,32; Apg. 20,28 *Lamsa Translation*), unbestritten notwendig ist. Genau genommen wurde diese Kirche durch die Jünger Christi, während ihrer Zeit (Röm. 16,16; Apg. 2,47) und durch Bruder Felix Y. Manalo zu der Zeit, die von der Bibel als Enden der Erde bezeichnet wird (Jes. 43,5-6; Mt. 24,33;6-7 *Einheitsübersetzung*), gepredigt und verbreitet. Im Gegensatz zu der sehr beliebten „Glauben allein"-Ansicht, wurde diese äußerst wichtige biblische Lehre von denen ignoriert oder abgelehnt, die sich entschieden haben nur das zu glauben, was ihrer Meinung nach für die meisten akzeptabel und für sie allein vorteilhaft ist. Was sie jedoch nicht wissen: diese „Glauben allein" oder die „Jesus nur als eigenen Retter anerkennen"-Ansicht ist nicht nur gegen Gottes großes Vorhaben für die Errettung der Menschheit, sondern wird dies auch das endgültige, tragische und verhängnisvolle Ende herbeiführen—die Vernichtung der Gottlosen oder allen Sündern am Tag des Gerichts (Spr. 11,31; 1 Kor. 6,9-10; 2 Petr. 3,7;10) und

La indiscutible Indispensabilidad de la Iglesia De Cristo

SIN QUE MUCHOS LO SEPAN, ya sea por poca o ninguna información, para adorar dignamente al verdadero Dios y para obtener Su salvación prometida, la Iglesia De Cristo establecida por Cristo (Mat. 16:18; Luc. 12:32; Hch. 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*) es sin duda imprescindible. De hecho, esta Iglesia fue predicada y propagada por los apóstoles durante su tiempo (Rom. 16:16; Hch. 2:47) y por el Hermano Félix Y. Manalo en el tiempo llamado por la Biblia los confines de la tierra (Isa. 43:5-6; Mat. 24:33, 6-7, *Reina Valera Contemporánea*). Esta enseñanza bíblica tan importante, que es contraria a la creencia popular "solo por la fe", ha sido ignorada o rechazada por los que eligen creer en lo que ellos mismos piensan que es aceptable para la mayoría y lo que consideran conveniente para ellos. Lo que no saben es que la creencia de que "solo por la fe" o "aceptar a Cristo como tu Salvador personal" no solo se opone al gran plan de Dios para la salvación del hombre (Efe. 2:3-10) sino que también le causará el más trágico y desastroso final—la destrucción en el Día del Juicio de los hombres impíos o todos los pecadores (Prov. 11:31; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 2 Ped. 3:7, 10) y el castigo eterno en el lago de fuego (Apoc. 21:8).

La Iglesia De Cristo en estos últimos días (Jn. 10:16; Hch. 20:28 *Lamsa Translation*; Rom. 9:24; Isa. 43:5 *Moffatt Translation*) está comprometida a cumplir el mandamiento de Cristo, el Salvador mismo:

"... 'Vayan por todo el mundo y prediquen la Buena Noticia a todos. El que crea y sea bautizado será salvo, pero el que se niegue a creer, será condenado.'" (Mar. 16:15-16, *Nueva Traducción Viviente*)

Esta instrucción de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, la obedecieron Sus apóstoles con el fin de cumplir la voluntad de Dios:

"Pues Dios amó tanto al mundo, que dio a su Hijo único, para que todo aquel que cree en él no muera, sino que tenga vida eterna" (Jn. 3:16, *Nueva Versión Internacional*)

La voluntad de Dios se expresa en el mandamiento de Cristo de predicar las Buenas Noticias a todas las personas y lugares porque la salvación del hombre ha sido la inspiración de los esfuerzos conjuntos de la Iglesia De Cristo para cumplir el objetivo de la campaña mundial de Dar Frutos En Abundancia.

El problema más grave del hombre

Incluso antes del nacimiento de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, el propósito de Dios en crear al hombre fue conocido claramente en el Antiguo Testamento:

"El fin de este asunto es que ya se ha escuchado todo. Teme, pues, a Dios y cumple sus mandamientos, porque esto es todo para el hombre. Pues Dios juzgará toda obra, buena o mala, aun la realizada en secreto."(Ecl. 12:13-14, *Ibid.*)

El sabio Rey Salomón declaró una importante verdad que cada uno debe entender y reflexionar. Él mismo llegó a esta conclusión cuando descubrió la vanidad de todo lo que el hombre consigue en este mundo—conocimiento, riqueza, poder, honor y fama (Capítulos 2 y 3 de Eclesiastés)—pero falla en cumplir el gran propósito de Dios en crearle, porque cuando muera rendirá cuentas a Dios, quien le juzgará según lo que hizo.

El mandamiento primordial de Dios al hombre es amarle por encima de todo, lo cual es, reconocerle como el único y verdadero Dios (Jn. 17:1, 3), adorarle y servirle (Sal. 95:6-7; 100:2-3), obedecer Sus mandamientos (1 Jn. 2:3) y vivir en rectitud (Efe. 4:23-24). Los que rechazan aceptar el plan de Dios de salvarles mediante Cristo (2 Tes. 1:8) y no obedecen el evangelio de nuestro Señor Jesucristo (2 Tes. 1:8) sufrirán el castigo de la destrucción eterna (2 Tes. 1:10) la cual es la segunda muerte, la muerte en el lago de fuego (Apoc. 20:14)

La única solución al problema más grave del hombre

Nadie menos que nuestro Señor Jesucristo a quién nuestro Dios Todopoderoso escogió como el

personally think as acceptable to the majority and what they consider convenient to them. What they do not know though is that this "faith-alone" or "just-accept-Christ as-your-personal-Savior" belief does not only oppose the great plan of God for man's salvation (Eph. 2:3-10) but also will cause him the ultimate, most tragic, and disastrous end—destruction on Judgment Day of ungodly men or all sinners (Prov. 11:31; I Cor. 6:9-10; II Pet. 3:7, 10) and eternal punishment in the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8).

The Church Of Christ in these last days (John 10:16; Acts 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*; Rom. 9:24; Isa. 43:5, *Moffatt Translation*) has been committed to fulfill the commandment of Christ, the Savior, Himself:

"... 'You are to go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere. Those who believe and are baptized will be saved. But those who refuse to believe will be condemned.'" (Mark 16:15-16, *Living Bible*)

This instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ which His apostles followed aims to fulfill God's will:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16, *New International Version*)

God's will expressed in Christ's commandment to preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere for man's salvation has been the inspiration behind the collective efforts of the Church Of Christ to realize the objective of its worldwide Abundant Fruit Bearing campaign.

Man's gravest problem

Even long before the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the purpose of God in creating man was made known as clearly stated in the Old Testament:

"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

- John 3:16, *New International Version*

God and keep his commandment, for this is the whole [duty] of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil." (Eccles. 12:13-14, *Ibid.*)

The wise King Solomon declared a very important truth every person should understand and reflect on. The king himself finally came to this realization when he found out the vanity of everything man accomplishes in this world—knowledge, wealth, power, honor, and fame (Chapters 2 and 3 of Ecclesiastes)—but he fails to fulfill God's very purpose why He created him, for when he dies he is accountable to God who will judge him according to what he has done.

Foremost among the commandments of God to man is to love Him above all, that is, he should recognize Him as the only one true God (John 17:1, 3), worship and serve Him (Ps. 95:6-7; 100:2-3), obey His commandments (I John 2:3), and live righteously (Eph. 4:23-24). Those who refuse to accept God's plan to save them through Jesus (II Thess. 1:8, *LB*) and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus (II Thess. 1:8, *NIV*) will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction (II Thess. 1:10, *Today's English Version*) which is the second death, death in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14).

The only solution to man's gravest problem

No less than our Lord Jesus Christ whom the Almighty God appointed as the Savior (Acts 5:31) explicitly commanded:

"I am the door; anyone who comes into the fold through me will be safe. ..." (John 10:9, *Revised English Bible*)

Anyone who wants to be saved then must enter the door that is no other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who followed this command are found in the fold or flock which is the Church Of Christ redeemed by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*) and the body whose head is Christ (Col. 1:18) to be saved by Him (Eph. 5:23) from the wrath of God (Rom. 5:9). Thus, people who are outside the Church Of Christ will be judged (I Cor. 5:13, *Revised Standard Version*) or will be burned (John 15:6), for they will be the ones to pay for their sins (John 8:24) since they are not among those redeemed by Christ; and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Heb. 9:22).

Dismissing any belief that disregards the undisputed significance of the Church Of Christ to the rendition of acceptable worship of God and man's salvation, Christ emphasized the indispensability of His Church which is God's will—grace and plan for man's salvation (Eph. 1:8-9)—as He stated:

"Not everyone who calls me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only those who do what my Father in heaven wants them to do. When the Judgment Day comes, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord! In your name we spoke God's message, by your name we drove out many demons and performed many miracles!' Then I will say to them, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you wicked people!'" (Matt. 7:21-23, *TEV*)

Notice that Apostle Paul did not say that all people will be free of condemnation, as what others believe in. The Bible specifies that those who are in Christ will not be condemned. There are many who claim that they are the ones who are in Christ because they recognize and believe in Him and they have accepted Christ as their personal Savior. But, who only truly belongs to Christ? In Matthew 16:18 it states:

"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (*Ibid.*)

If there is someone who can rightfully and categorically introduce those who are in Christ, it is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He said, "I will build My church".

Hence, those who are inside the Church built by Christ are recognized by Christ as His and thus, they are truly in Him. The name of the true Church built by Christ is the Church Of Christ (Acts 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*). Therefore, in order for man to be saved and not be condemned or punished on Judgment day, he needs to become a member of the Church Of Christ.

What if a member of the Church Of Christ dies before the Second Coming of Christ, how can he or she be saved? Apostle Paul said that the dead in Christ would be raised first or would be included in the first resurrection:

"For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first." (I Thess. 4:16, *Revised Standard Version*)

Those who will be joining the first resurrection are truly blessed because the second death will have no power over them (Rev. 20:6, *Ibid.*). Meanwhile, the true Christians who will still be alive when the Savior returns will be caught up together with those resurrected to meet and be with the Lord (I Thess. 4:17, *Ibid.*). On the other hand, those who did evil or those who did not accept and obey the gospel will be resurrected to be judged 1,000 years after the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5). When these dead will have risen, fire will come down from heaven and consume them. They will be thrown into the lake of fire and will be tormented there day and night forever and ever (Rev. 20: 7-10).

What will be experienced by those who are in Christ who are blessed to reach the Holy City on Judgment Day? There, Christ will change their weak mortal bodies and will make them like His own glorious body (Phil. 3:20-21, *TEV*). They will no longer experience sorrow, crying, pain, or death and that the Lord God will be with them and be their God (Rev. 21:1-4, *Ibid.*).

And because man does not know the exact day and time of Christ's Second Advent (Matt. 24:36, *NKJV*) and the time of his death (James 4:14), Apostle Paul teaches that now, more than ever, is the appropriate time that man should do something to ensure his receiving of salvation on Judgment Day (II Cor. 6:2) and the only way one can do this is by joining the Church that will be saved by Christ which is none other than the Church Of Christ (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18; Rom. 16:16).

The undisputed indispensability of the Church Of Christ

By CELERINO G. BACLAAN

NOT KNOWN TO MANY, either for lack of information or without any information at all, in matters of worshiping the true God that is worthy to Him and of attaining His promised salvation, the Church Of Christ founded by Christ (Matt. 16:18; Luke 12:32; Acts 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*) is undisputedly indispensable. In fact, this Church was preached and propagated by the apostles during their time (Rom. 16:16; Acts 2:47) and by Brother Felix Y. Manalo at the time called by the Bible ends of the earth (Isa. 43:5-6; Matt. 24:33, 6-7, *New King James Version*). Contrary to the very popular "faith alone" belief, this extremely important biblical teaching has been ignored or rejected by those who choose to believe what they

Judgment Day: the truth, the signs, and the blessed

By EDUARDO D. MANZANO

DUE TO THE CONTINUOUS and unabated hardships and sufferings people in this world experience day by day, many strive hard to earn a living to provide for their personal needs and those of their family as well. Though there is nothing wrong if man works hard in this life, there are those who deliberately abandon the worship of the true God while others neglect to seek the true religion for they have become materialistic or greatly value material things more than the spiritual ones. What is the evil of this?

The truth

What should man know that will surely happen in this world? Apostle Paul teaches:

"Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:31, *New King James Version*)

Man should understand and not forget that God appointed a day when He will judge the world. This will happen on the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 1:14-15, *Ibid.*). Death is the proof that Judgment Day will surely come (Heb. 9:27) because the God who appointed death is also the same God who appointed Judgment Day.

Will it still take a long while before the great day of the Lord or Judgment Day comes? No. It is very near and coming fast just like what is stated in Zephaniah 1:14:

"The great day of the LORD is near—very near and coming fast! That day will be bitter, for even the bravest soldiers will cry out in despair!" (*Today's English Version*)

The signs

What are the proofs that Judgment Day is very near? All the events foretold by the Lord Jesus Christ signifying that the end of the world is near have already been fulfilled. The Bible says:

"Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will* be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?' So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these *are* the beginning of sorrows. (Matt. 24:3, 33, 6-8, *NKJV*)

Wars or conflicts between nations, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places—all of these are signs indicating that the world is already near its end. Is it not true that such events had happened and have been happening even now in our time?

Man cannot escape God's judgment because the world we now live in and all things herein will be burned up by fire and there will be perdition of ungodly man (II Pet. 3:10, 17, *Ibid.*). Because of sin, man is condemned by God to suffer death in the lake of fire—this is the second death (Rom. 5:12; 6:23; Rev. 20:14, *Ibid.*). Thus, the gravest danger that man could possibly face that he needs to address in the soonest possible time is the impending punishment that God lays in store on the day of Judgment.

Is there any amount of money, material things, or riches in this world that man can use as a ransom for him to be excluded from eternal damnation? The Bible speaks thus:

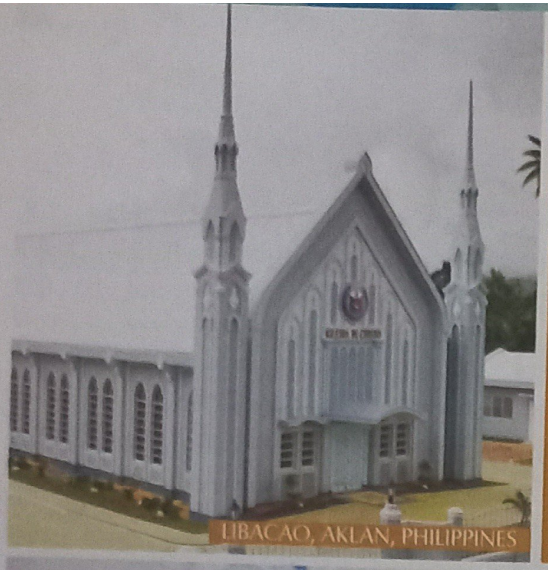
"Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the LORD's wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land." (Zeph. 1:18, *Ibid.*)

No matter how rich or intelligent a person is, even though he has amassed numerous titles and glories in this world, but the fact remains that he cannot be saved by such things.

The blessed ones

How then can one be saved from God's wrath on Judgment Day? Whom does the Bible introduce as those who will not be condemned or punished on that Day?

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." (Rom. 8:1, *Ibid.*)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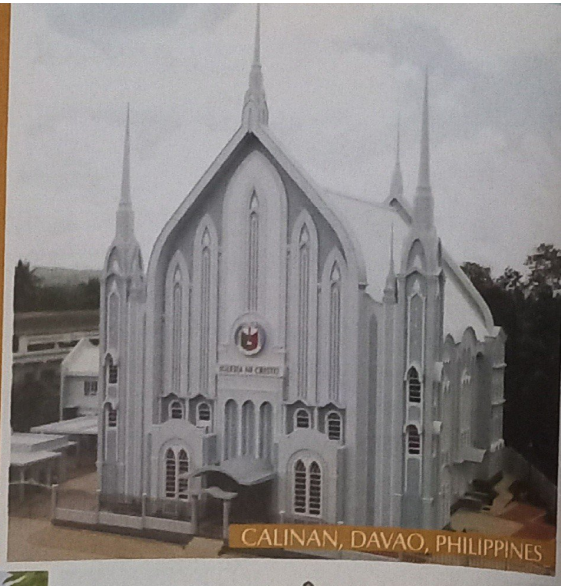
The *Iglesia Ni Cristo* is continuously and fervently committed to build and dedicate houses of worship all around the globe because this brings glory, honor, and praise to God.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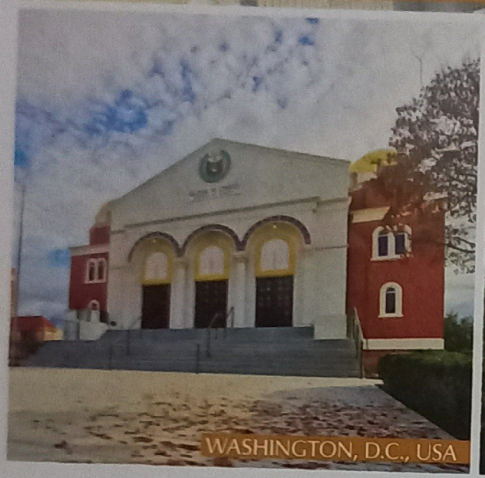
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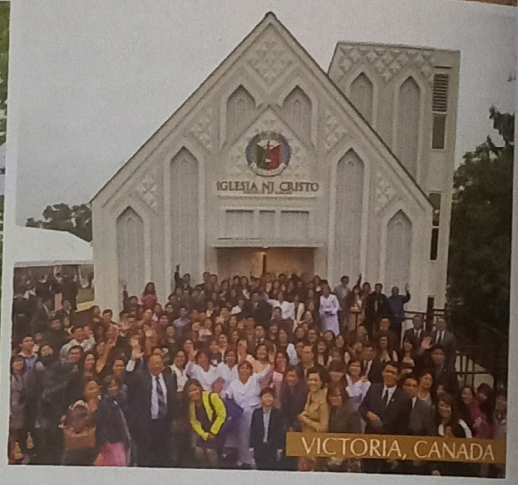


VICTORIA, CANADA

answers our prayers made inside the house of worship. We also express our high regard for our sacred duty in worshiping God in this holy place by imitating His servants of old who yearned and longed to praise Him as declared in Psalms 84:1-2, 10:

"LORD God All-Powerful, your temple is so lovely! Deep in my heart I long for your temple, and with all that I am I sing joyful songs to you. ... One day in your temple is better than a thousand anywhere else. I would rather serve in your house, than live in the homes of the wicked." (*Contemporary English Version*)

For God's faithful servants, there is no better place to be than in His holy temple.

The reason for building God's temple

Although it is man's primary obligation to serve God, his Creator, some have debated whether or not the place or edifice for worship is actually needed. God's first people, the Israelites were commanded to build a certain structure where they should worship Him as stated in Exodus 25:8-9:

"Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it." (*New American Standard Bible*)

This sanctuary, also known as the tabernacle, served as a temporary place of worship as the Israelites at that time did not reside in a permanent place but were still traveling to the land promised by God. Nevertheless, the Lord God expected them to build a sanctuary based on the specifications and design He gave wherein their worship of Him should be conducted.

When the nation of Israel had already settled and were given kings to rule over them, God commanded the king, David, that a permanent dwelling place be constructed to replace the transportable tabernacle (II Sam. 7:5-6). It was started and completed during the reign of David's son, Solomon, for the name of the Lord. (II Sam. 7:12-13; II Chr. 2:1, 4). Solomon realized that the building of the temple was a commandment that could not be disregarded for it had something to do with the spiritual life of God's nation. He fulfilled the will of God as illustrated in his offering when the temple was completed and dedicated to the Lord as stated in I Kings 8:62:

"Solomon and the people dedicated the temple to the LORD by offering twenty-two thousand cattle and one hundred twenty thousand sheep as sacrifices to ask the LORD's blessing." (*CEV*)

As commanded by the Lord God to His first nation, His nation in these last days, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, is continuously and fervently committed to build and dedicate houses of worship all around the globe because this brings glory, honor, and praise to God.

"Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, And You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all." (I Chr. 29:11-12, *Ibid.*)

It is, therefore, not fanaticism as other people might think when the members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* at present do what their first-century brethren from Macedonia did—they were extremely generous in their offerings although they were very poor (II Cor. 8:1-3, *TEV*). It is in fact an undeniable proof of unconditional obedience to the Almighty God.

It is crystal clear to the members of the Church Of Christ that through their cheerful giving of generous contributions they please God. This is so because through their devotion to the giving of voluntary offerings, they are able to help not only in the propagation of the gospel and in supplying the needs of the saints (those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ) but also in the construction of houses of worship that brings glory and honor to God (II Cor. 9:12-13, *NKJV*; Hag. 1:8, *Ibid.*). Being able to fulfill God's command to be devoted to the giving of offerings is a joy in itself but a more profound joy awaits the members of the Church Of Christ who are generous in the giving of offerings, thus:

"Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life." (I Tim. 6:18-19, *New International Version*)

Edifices for the glory of God

By RONNIE C. GONZALES

DESPITE THE widespread economic recession affecting many people all over the world, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* or Church Of Christ continues the great work of building and dedicating hundreds of houses of worship year after year. This year, as the Church commemorates its centennial, not only have houses of worship been constructed and dedicated to God for His greater glory, but other buildings as well, one of which has served as the venue for the largest worship service gathering in the history of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*—The Philippine Arena.

There may be some who perceive it inappropriate to be constructing such marvelous edifices during times of recession or when the majority of the world's countries are facing severe economic crisis. It is thus that they propose instead to find ways in helping people overcome poverty as opposed to fulfilling the work of building a temple to worship the Lord.

The significance of the house of worship

But how important is the house of worship and the worship service held in it which is the reason the Church Of Christ continues to construct and renovate (those that need renovating) such edifices? This is what the Bible says through Prophet Isaiah:

"Many people will come and say, 'Let's go to the mountain of the LORD God of Jacob and worship in his temple.' The LORD will teach us his Law from Jerusalem, and we will obey him." (Isa. 2:3, *Contemporary English Version*)

The very reason we, members of the Church Of Christ, continue to unite with the Church Administration in building houses of worship is that these serve as the designated places where we are taught the laws and commands of God. Aside from this, it is also in the house of worship where God listens to the prayers offered by His servants (Ps. 116:18, 2-7, *Today's English Version*). It is vital that during these trying times we ensure that our Almighty God is indeed with us. We can be assured that He will protect and save us from the difficulties of this life when we call on Him during our congregational worship service inside His holy sanctuary. Thus, we should never forsake our duty of worshiping and serving God especially when we encounter various problems. According to the Bible, God is merciful and compassionate, and is not only ready to listen but also

The one body of Christ is the Church and it is called the Church Of Christ (Col. 1:18; Acts 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*). Hence, true members of the Church Of Christ wholeheartedly give voluntary contributions.

Mindful of this great privilege and never wanting to disappoint God, the Creator, the members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* observe His pertinent commandments related to the giving of offerings. As such, for them, the giving of contributions is a duty or an obligation that they must not neglect (Gal. 6:5-6, *Revised Standard Version*; II Cor. 9:12-13, *Ibid.*). And so, they observe what God commands, thus:

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." (II Cor. 9:7, *New King James Version*)

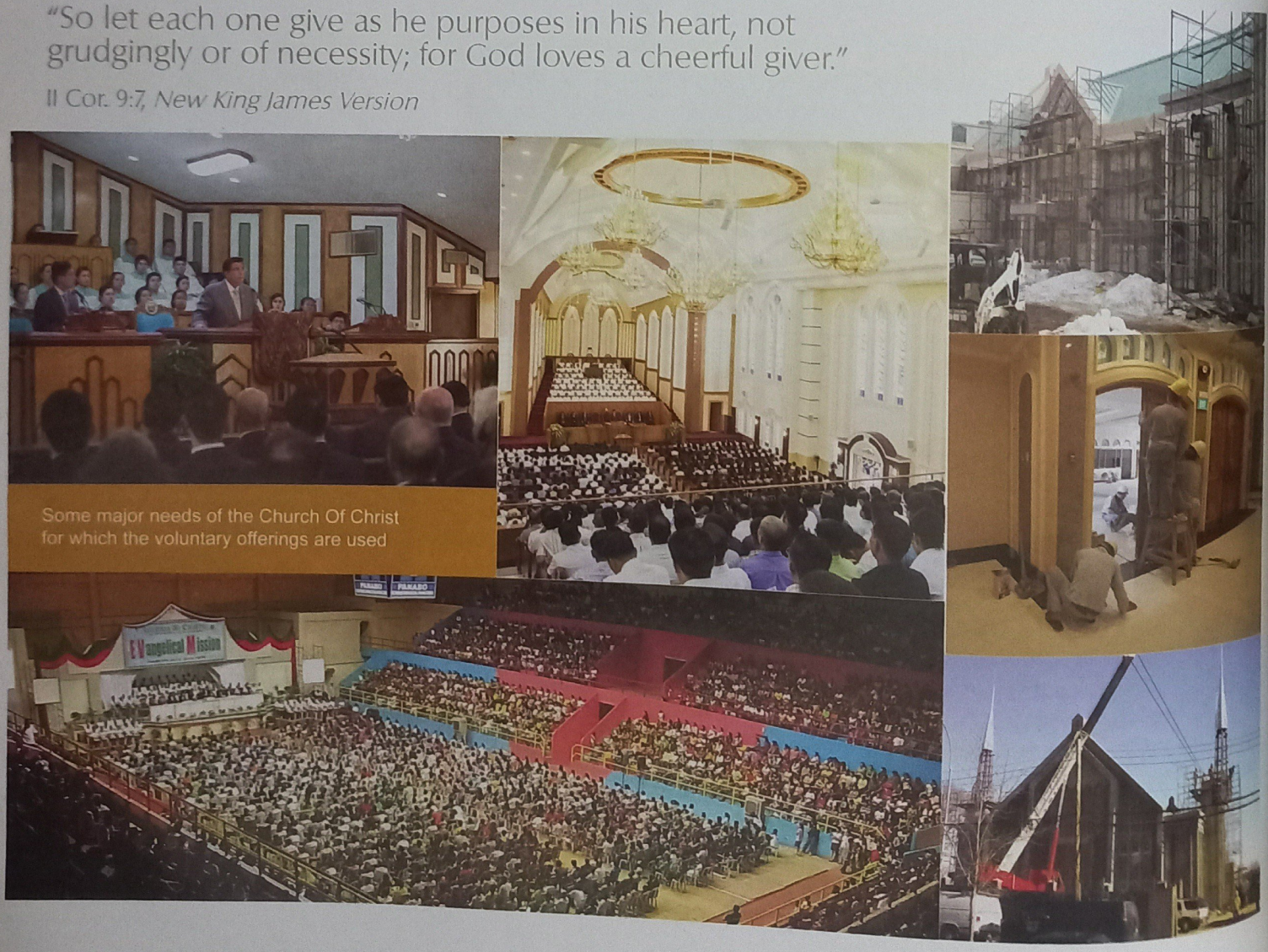
This is why from the Executive Minister himself, the ministers and Church workers, the officers, and all members of the Church give their voluntary offerings. The devotion members of the Church Of Christ accord the giving of voluntary contributions is visible even in the manner by which they prepare their offerings. Never wanting to disrespect God, they follow His command which their first-century brethren did follow, thus:

"Every Sunday each of you must put aside some money, in proportion to what you have earned, and save it up, so that there will be no need to collect money when I come." (I Cor. 16:2, *Today's English Version*)

Thus, members of the Church Of Christ prepare their offerings beforehand. They do this because the Almighty God wants the giving of offerings to be "a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation" (II Cor. 9:5, *NKJV*). Rightly so, for how can a true servant of God obey this command grudgingly when he knows what the people of God even then knew, thus:

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."

II Cor. 9:7, *New King James Version*



Some major needs of the Church Of Christ for which the voluntary offerings are used

purified by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 9:14, *Today's English Version*). Because they were purified or purchased by the blood of Christ, they received the right to render true worship to the Lord God. According to Apostle Paul, the one purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is the Church Of Christ or the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Acts 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*). Therefore, although it is man's obligation to offer true worship to the Lord God, it is very important for him to be part of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* in order to fulfill that sacred duty.

In the light of this biblical truth, it is then the members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* whom the Lord God seeks or expects to render Him true worship. That is why the apostles left this very strict instruction—not to get out of "the habit to meeting for worship" or not to miss attending any schedule of the worship service (Heb. 10:25, *Contemporary English Version*). This should always be true to the lives of every Church member because the very reason one should join the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* is to fulfill his primal duty to the Lord God our Maker: to worship and obey Him throughout his lifetime. No matter what happens in the lives of true members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, they will never abandon the worship services.

This is why the brethren in the Church gather together in the houses of worship, singing hymns of praise, receiving instructions and teachings, and praying together all for their edification (I Cor. 14:26, 15, *Lamsa Translation*). These worship gatherings are all "done in a proper and orderly way" (I Cor. 14:40, *TEV*). Part of this order that the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* implemented is the seating arrangement during the worship services. Guests who attend such gatherings for the first time immediately notice the separate seating of the males and females.

Church members give utmost regard to worship gatherings because in such assemblies God is "to be held in reverence by all those around Him" (Ps. 89:7, *NKJV*). Abiding by this teaching, Church members attend the worship services in their "holy array" or "proper attire"—garments that are "fitting for the sacred occasion" (Ps. 96:8-9, *Revised Standard Version*; *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 231; Ps. 96:9, *Interpreter's Bible Commentary*). Since there is no Church occasion more sacred than the worship service, members from all walks of life, including those who are financially challenged, are doing their best to provide themselves with formal clothing appropriate for the occasion. This is because they firmly believe that in placing the sacred gatherings as their top priority in life, the Lord God is glorified.

With regard to the worries of this life, these will never affect true members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* in dedicating themselves to worship services, for they firmly hold on to God's promise, "If a person trusts me, I will save him. I will protect my followers who worship my name. My followers will call to me for help, and I will answer them. I will be with them when they have trouble. I will rescue them and honor them" (Ps. 91:14-15, *Easy-to-Read Version*).

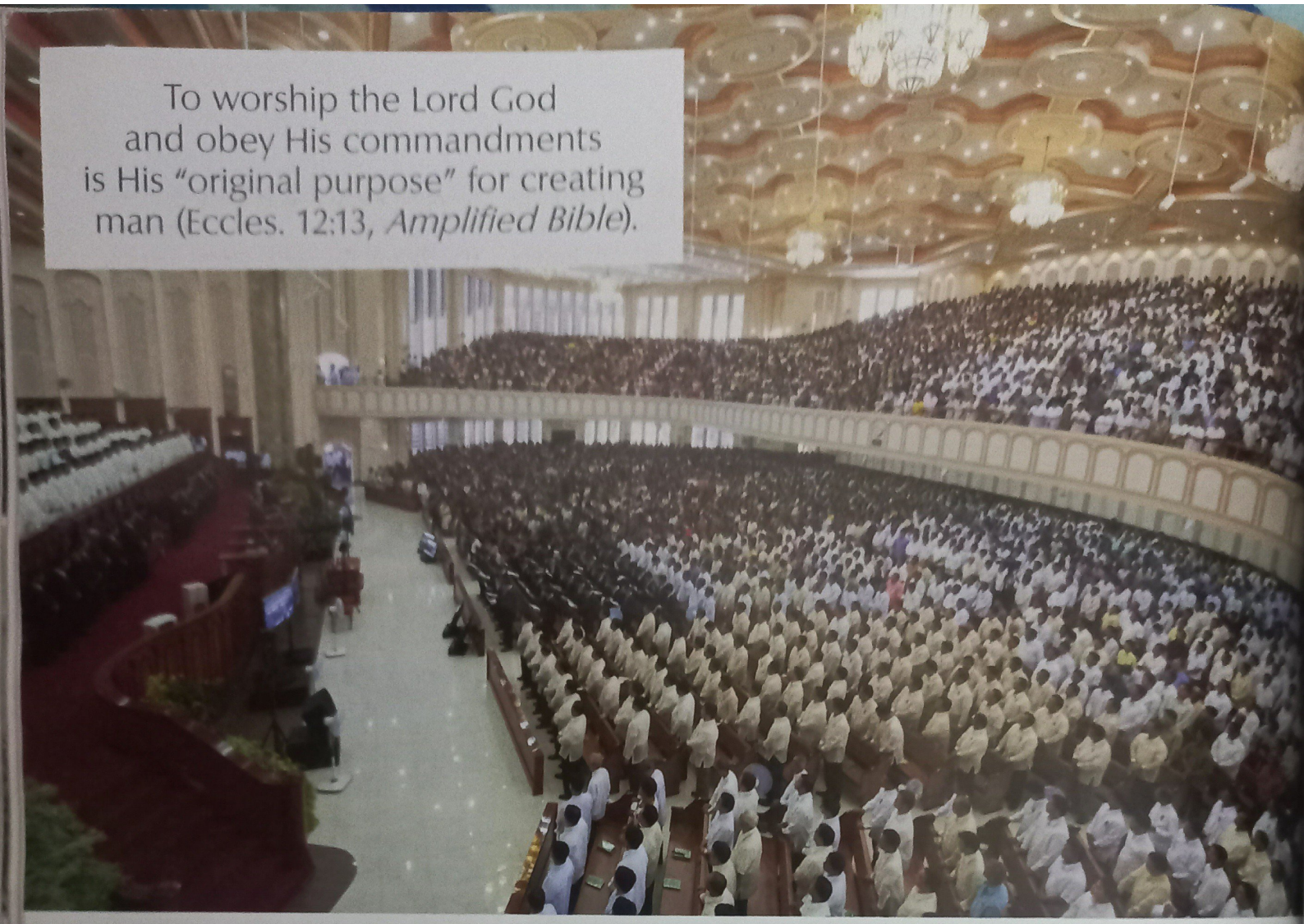
The offerings that are pleasing to God

By ARNEL M. ARMENIA

THE GIVING OF VOLUNTARY contributions that is acceptable to God is that which is done by the members of the true Church Of Christ. That is why one of the fundamental teachings inside the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* concerns devotion to the giving of voluntary offerings. This sacred endeavor is staunchly upheld by the members of the Church Of Christ having faith or believing that such indeed is God's command and is well pleasing to Him.

When Apostle Paul said, "Now of well doing and contributing be not forgetful, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:16, *Concordant Literal New Testament*) he was not speaking to all men but to those who belong to the Church Of Christ. This is so because those who have been given the right to praise or please God are the ones who have been called into the one body of Christ, thus:

"And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful." (Col. 3:15, *New Living Translation*)



To worship the Lord God and obey His commandments is His "original purpose" for creating man (Eccles. 12:13, *Amplified Bible*).

The worship services in the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*

By ALEJANDRO R. SINO CRUZ JR.

ONE OF THE notable qualities of members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) is that they devote themselves to attending worship services regularly. Twice a week, they gather themselves in the houses of worship, firm in the faith that this is a vital part of their services to the Almighty God. They do this even amidst adverse situations—experiencing poverty, calamities, and other difficulties in life. Thus, many people wonder why Church members constantly fulfill this sacred endeavor.

The reason that Church members devote themselves to worship services is that the Father Himself, Who is the only true God, seeks "true worshipers" to render Him praises and true worship (John 4:23, *New International Version*). This is only right, for the Lord God is the Creator of all things. Being one of God's creation, it is the inherent obligation of man to worship the Lord our Maker (Ps. 95:6-7, *New King James Version*). To worship the Lord God and obey His commandments is His "original purpose" for creating man (Eccles. 12:13, *Amplified Bible*).

However, one ought to understand that the Lord God seeks true worshipers because there are others who also worship Him, but they are not true worshipers and being so "their worship is worthless, for they teach their man-made laws instead of those from God" (Matt. 15:9, *Living Bible*). Hence, the Bible teaches that not all people who worship the Lord God are true worshipers. There are worship services that are worthless before Him. So that man's worship services to God may not go to waste, he must make certain that he belongs to those whom God considers as "true worshipers."

The Bible identifies the true worshipers as those who were

Wallace Ferguson and Geoffrey Bruun, in their book *A Survey of European Civilization*, say:

"The cult of a host of saints and martyrs sprang up to take the place of the many local gods of pagan mythology. The pagan who had relied on the protection of the homely gods of the hearth found similar comfort from the adoption of a patron saint. Christian celebrations were created to replace the feasts and holidays of the older religions. The assimilation by Christianity of so much popular belief and practice was in no small degree responsible for its almost universal acceptance during this early period, but at the sacrifice of its early purity and simplicity." (p. 92)

The disappearance of the original Church Of Christ

The disappearance of the first-century Church Of Christ came so gradually that its becoming the Catholic Church was almost indiscernible. So, while Catholic Church authorities claim historical affinity with the Church Of Christ founded in Jerusalem, they cannot show the same with the doctrines they are now teaching. The Catholic Church whose full official name was formed only at the Vatican Council I in 1870 could not be the Church Of Christ that Christ built. It was not the case of a tiny acorn being transformed into an oak tree. It is a completely different and poisonous tree.

Loss of divine guidance

Before ascending into heaven, Christ promised the apostles that He would send the Holy Spirit to guide them and to remind them of whatever He had taught them (John 14:26; 16:13). Such divine guidance is very evident in the Book of Acts (Acts 2:4-11; 8:29-31; 13:2-4; 15:28-29; 16:6-7). Even when disputes arose, no division resulted because the decisions from the central administration were accepted with gladness (Acts 15:1-31). But with the apostles gone and with the entrance of false teachers into the Church a matter of fact, such guidance was totally absent. Will Durant, in his book already cited, said:

"... The followers of Christ, in the first three centuries, divided into a hundred creeds." (p. 604)

Christological dispute was one of the causes. Karl Baus, in his book *History of the Church*, says:

"As a consequence of the Christological disputes, the national churches beyond the eastern frontiers of the Empire separated themselves from the imperial Byzantine Church, while Germanic Christian kingdoms of both Arian (Ostrogothic and Visigothic) and Roman (Frankish) observance were formed in the western Empire. The rise of the specifically Roman Church of Gregory the Great and the Arab invasions of the seventh century marked the turning-point ... the Germano-Roman West became estranged from Byzantium." (p. 7)

The Bible states that divisions are works of the flesh and hostile to God (I Cor. 3:3; Rom. 8:7-9).

Reappearance of the true Church Of Christ

The existing membership of the first-century Church Of Christ was composed of the Jews and the Gentiles. Some of them died natural deaths in the Church, others were persecuted and killed for non-acceptance of official Catholic teachings, and the rest were led away into accepting non-biblical teachings.

The Church Of Christ established by Christ in the first century of the Christian Era would have members not yet in existence but still to be called, the third part, claimed by Jesus as His other sheep not yet of this fold—those still to be called into the Church (John 10:16). This group was identified by Apostle Peter as from afar off (Acts 2:39), specified by the Prophet Isaiah as from islands in the Far East (Isa. 41:1-5; 43:5), and to be called at the ends of the earth (Isa. 43:6).

This third part arose in the Philippines in 1914—the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* preached by Brother Felix Y. Manalo.

With assistance from John Ramilo Emano and Rvy Medicielo

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Catholic faith in Jesus not derived from scriptures

It is very easy to see that Catholic beliefs and practices are not found in the Bible. Catholics do not see this as a problem; in fact, they are even proud of it. Karl Adam, in his book *The Spirit of Catholicism*, says:

"'Without the Scripture,' says Mohler, 'the true form of the sayings of Jesus would have been withheld from us, '... Yet the Catholic does not derive his faith in Jesus from Scriptures" (p. 66).

True faith comes from hearing the true teaching of God (Rom. 10:17).

Where does the Catholic Church get her teachings? From paganism, as stated by two prominent Catholic authors. John Gilland Brunini, in his book *Whereon to Stand: What Catholics Believe and Why*, says:

"In her methods she has borrowed from many sources—from the Jewish ecclesiastical system from Roman, and hence pagan, religious and civil procedures." (p. 316)

Rev. John F. Sullivan, in his book *The Externals of the Catholic Church*, says:

"Thus, it is true, in a certain sense, that some Catholic rites and ceremonies are a reproduction of those pagan creeds." (p. 156)

Yet, what do Catholics say of the fact that their faith cannot be identified with primitive Christianity, nor even with the gospel of Christ? Karl Adam, in his book mentioned above, says:

"We Catholics acknowledged readily, without any shame, nay with pride, that Catholicism cannot be identified simply and wholly with primitive Christianity, nor even with the Gospel of Christ, in the same way that the great oak cannot be identified with the tiny acorn." (p. 2)

Thus by their own admission, Catholic authorities accept that the original Church Of Christ established by Christ and administered by the apostles is the tiny acorn that cannot be compared to the great oak which is the Catholic Church.

The great change

Apostle Paul vehemently warned the members of the first-century Church Of Christ against destructive changes, thus:

"... Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8-9, *King James Version*)

That the Church Of Christ gained a foothold in Rome through the missionary works of Apostle Paul is indisputable. But even during his lifetime, Apostle Paul spent a lot of energy warding off false teachings as can be seen in his sometimes very angry letters. And when he died, history records that false teachers, now rid of the presence of the apostle, finally succeeded in infiltrating the Church Of Christ. *The World's Great Events* states:

"At first the history of the Roman Church is identical with the history of Christian truth. But unhappily there came a time when streams of poison began to flow from the once pure fountain." (pp. 163-164)

The poison referred to are false teachings which came from false teachers who were now in positions of authority in the Church Of Christ after Paul's death—poison because such false teachings will lead to man's eternal damnation. Apostle Paul had warned that this poison would come from the overseers of the Church Of Christ who would do evil work after his death (Acts 20:29). This was fulfilled. *The New Book of Knowledge* states:

"When the original Apostles died, the leadership of the Church was taken over by local pastors, known as bishops. Under them were ministers of lower rank, known as presbyters and deacons. The Church organized the area of the Roman Empire into provinces. The bishops at the head of the Christian communities in the large cities such as Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Carthage ranked the highest." (p. 281)

A stream of poison flowed from one of these bishops. Rev. Edward K. Taylor, in his book *'Roman' Catholic*, states:

"'Catholic' ... was first used by St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch in Syria, who was martyred about A.D. 110. ... The Church founded by Christ is here, for the first time, called 'the Catholic Church,' ... It was to stress the unity of the universal Church that St. Ignatius invented the name." (p. 3)

This is lethal poison. The only name through which man can be saved—the name Christ (Acts 4:10) was rejected by this bishop and replaced by an invented one. The Church has then become poisonous.

Both God and Christ abhor paganism (Jer. 10:2; I Cor. 10:19-22). This makes paganism poisonous. But what did the first-century Church Of Christ, now changed into the Catholic Church, do with this poison? It absorbed such poison into its very own system. Historian Will Durant, in his book *The Story of Civilization III—Caesar and Christ*, says:

"Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it. The Greek mind, dying, came to a transmigrated life in the theology and liturgy of the Church; ... the Greek mysteries passed down into the impressive mystery of the Mass. Other pagan cultures contributed to the syncretist result. From Egypt came the ideas of a divine trinity ... the adoration of the Mother and Child ... From Phrygia came the worship of the Great Mother; from Syria the resurrection drama of Adonis, ... The Mithraic ritual so closely resembled the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass ... Christianity was the last great creation of the ancient pagan world." (p. 595)

accepted—you may well put up with it!" (II Cor. 11:3-4, *NKJV*)

Apostle Paul cautioned the first Christians that there would be preachers who would preach another Jesus whom the apostles did not preach. The apostles preached a Jesus who is man in nature (Acts 2:22; I Tim. 2:5). Is this not contrary to what many preachers teach nowadays—that Christ is God? Apostle Paul sternly advised man to rebuke the belief that is against the teaching of the true gospel (Gal. 1:6-8).

Truly of Christ and will be saved

On the other hand, how important is it that how we recognize Christ is correct and in accordance with the teaching of the Bible? Jesus Himself affirmed thus:

"I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own." (John 10:14, *NKJV*).

According to Christ, He is known by those who are His own. Thus, the mark of the true Church and the true servants of Christ is their recognition of Christ. Anyone who does not rightly recognize Christ cannot be counted among those recognized by the Savior as His own and they will not be allowed to enter into the kingdom of heaven or they will not be saved (Matt. 7:21, 23, *Ibid*).

On the other hand, what is the importance of recognizing that the Father alone is the one true God? The Lord Jesus Christ explained thus:

"Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: 'Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You. And **this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God**, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent'." (John 17:1, 3, *NKJV*, emphasis ours).

This is the reason the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* continues to uphold the biblical truths we believe in despite numerous criticisms from other religions. The correct recognition that the Father in heaven is the one true God is very vital in leading man to the attainment of salvation and eternal life on Judgment Day.

The shift from the first-century Church of Christ to the Roman Catholic Church of the succeeding centuries

By PEDRITO B. PLACIO

MANY ARE AGHAST, if not incredibly surprised, at the teaching of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* or Church Of Christ that emerged in the Philippines in 1914 that it is the true Church established by Christ. There are even those who do not include it among the so-called "Christian" churches because the Jesus Christ it preaches is not God but man. The prevailing belief is that the Catholic Church is the only church that can claim historical roots back to the first century and thus, is the true Church founded by Jesus Christ.

Catholic claim of historicity

"The name of the Church founded by Jesus Christ is the Catholic Church. ... It is clear that the Church founded by Christ must be able to trace its origin in an unbroken line back to the Apostles. This means not only that her leaders, and especially the Pope, must be genuine successors of the Apostles. It means also that the doctrine and the basic moral norms these leaders preach, and the means of grace they administer, must be of apostolic origin." (*The Creed*, pp. 205, 215)

Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopedia states thus:

"ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, collective designation for the portion of Christendom that acknowledges the supremacy of the pope and considers submission to papal authority in matters of faith an indispensable condition of membership in its ranks. The Roman Catholic Church regards itself as the only legitimate inheritor, by an unbroken episcopal succession descending from Saint Peter to the present time, of the commission and powers conferred by Jesus Christ upon the twelve Apostles; ..." (p. 349)

of being do contradict the teaching of Christ about Himself.

This teaching of Christ regarding His nature or state of being is also what His apostles taught. According to Apostle Peter, Christ is "a man attested by God with mighty works and wonders" (Acts 2:22, *Revised Standard Version*) while Apostle Paul declared that Christ, who is the mediator between men and God, is man (I Tim. 2:5, *NKJV*).

A dual nature?

There are those who believe that Christ is not only man but also God. The Bible does not agree with this belief. The true God Himself clarified that He is God and not man (Hos. 11:9, *Ibid.*) and that man is not God (Ezek. 28:2, *Ibid.*). The truth that Christ is man is a solid proof that He (Christ) is not God. The teaching that Christ is God incarnate is against the truth written in the Bible because God does not change or undergo even a shadow of change (Mal. 3:6; James 1:17, *Ibid.*).

Many religious groups twist these biblical truths and even argue that while the only true God in heaven is the Father, Christ was the true God when He was still on earth. Is this true? Can there be one true God in heaven and still another One on earth?

"To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself *is* God; *there is* none other besides Him. Therefore know this day, and consider *it* in your heart, that the LORD Himself *is* God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; ***there is* no other**." (Deut. 4:35, 39, *NKJV*, emphasis ours)

Therefore, there is only one God in heaven and on earth and He is the Almighty Father. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself acknowledges this truth that there is only one true God. Such is what we can read in Mark 12:28-29:

"One of the teachers of religion who was standing there listening to the discussion realized that Jesus had answered well. So he asked, 'Of all the commandments, which is the most important?' Jesus replied, 'The one that says, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only God"'." (*Living Bible*)

"Christ became God since He ascended to heaven," others claim. How did Christ Himself prove that this belief is wrong? In John 20:17, this is recorded:

"Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God"'." (*NKJV*)

This was the event before the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven. Take note that Christ did not say that He would ascend to heaven to become God or as another God, nor did He say, "I, your God on earth, am ascending to your God in heaven." Truth is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is now in heaven sitting at the right side of God, remains a man in nature or state of being (Ps. 80:17, *NKJV*; Col. 3:1, *Today's English Version*). He did not turn into God or another God.

A blasphemy to Christ?

For the proponents of the Christ-is-God doctrine, the belief of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* that Christ is man is tantamount to belittling and downright blasphemy against Him. This is far from the truth! We recognize Christ as man because it is what the Bible teaches so we do not in any way belittle, downgrade, or blaspheme Him. The truth is, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* holds in high regard the Lord Jesus Christ. We recognize Him as our Lord (Acts 2:36, *NKJV*), Savior (Acts 5:31, *Ibid.*), Mediator to God (I Tim. 2:5, *Ibid.*), Head of the Church Of Christ and He was given authority on heaven and earth (Eph. 2:21-22, *Ibid.*), the only man who did not commit sin (I Pet. 2:21-22, *Ibid.*), and the throne of grace (Heb. 4:14, 16, *Ibid.*). We also worship Christ, not because He is God, but because such was a commandment from the Father (Phil. 2:9-11, *Ibid.*).

Had the adherents of the Christ-is-God doctrine relied solely on the Bible in their belief about the nature of Christ, they would not have fallen into the false belief that Christ is the true God for the Bible clearly showed that God and Christ are two different beings. Some of their differences include the following: God has no beginning (Ps. 90:2, *Ibid.*) while Christ had a beginning—He came from God (John 8:42, *Ibid.*); God is immortal (I Tim. 1:17, *Ibid.*) whereas Christ died (John 19:30, 33, *Ibid.*); The true God does not recognize any other God besides Himself (Isa. 44:8, *Ibid.*) whereas Jesus deified God (Mark 15:34, *Ibid.*); God does not get tired (Isa. 40:28, *New International Version*) while Christ got tired (John 4:6, *Ibid.*); The Almighty God is spirit in state of being—He does not have flesh nor bones, unlike the Lord Jesus Christ (John 4:23; Luke 24:36-39). These differences between the true God and Christ only prove that Christ is not God and that He is different from God.

Not a new thing

We should not be surprised if there are preachers nowadays who teach that Christ is God. Apostle Paul long ago forewarned that there would be such preachers even in our time:

"But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not

"... And *there* is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; *There* is none besides Me" (Isa. 45:21, *Ibid.*).

This belief is not true only for a particular period of time because He said:

"Besides me there is no other god; there never was and never will be." (Isa. 43:10, *TEV*)

Hence, other than the Father, there is no mention in the Old Testament of any other God.

God of the New Testament

"When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. ... And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth'" (John 17:1, 3, *New Living Translation*).

The truth as expounded by Jesus Christ Himself in the Christian era, the last dispensation of time, is that there is only one true God—He is the Father. Christ did not declare that He (the Son) Himself or the Holy Spirit and together with the Father is the one true God. Jesus emphasized the absolute oneness of God by the use of the term "only". This teaching of Christ is very important because it gives great emphasis on the truth that God is one (not three in one or more) true God. To have this knowledge and faith will lead to eternal life.

Nevertheless, there are those who argue that if Christ were not God, then why did He not declare that He is not God? Such people do not fully understand or are not completely satisfied with what Christ has taught that the Father is the only true God. How can Christ be God also if He Himself recognizes the Father as the only true God?

Today, throughout the world, various thoughts and beliefs are being held by people concerning deities or gods and goddesses that are made of gold, silver, and stone (Acts 17:29-30). Many have been ignorant of the identity of the true God, and since He cannot be seen by man's naked eye because He is spirit in nature (John 4:24; Luke 24:39) they substitute Him with images made by hands and treat these images as gods. The same people have "exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25).

Finally, true Christians, members of the Church Of Christ, do not in any way subscribe to polytheism—the belief that there is more than one true God. Thus, what like the Old Testament and New Testament teach and what Brother Felix Y. Manalo, the last messenger of God, taught as an all-time irrefutable truth—that the Father is the only one true God.

The *Iglesia Ni Cristo*'s unshakeable belief that Christ is not God

By EDUARDO D. MANZANO

THE *IGLESIA NI CRISTO* is firm in its belief that there is only one true God, the Father in heaven, and that Christ is man in nature or state of being. Christ is not God neither is He another God nor one of the three persons of the so-called "Holy Trinity". This is contrary to the belief of many people who belong to other religions that uphold and preach that Christ is God. Some even accuse the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* of belittling, downgrading, and blaspheming Christ because we recognize Him as man and not God. But despite others' criticisms, what is the reason we resolutely adhere to the teaching that Christ is man and not God?

The Bible's standpoint

What is Christ's true nature, according to the teaching of the Bible?

"But now you seek to kill Me, a **Man** who has told you the truth which I heard from God. ..." (John 8:40, *New King James Version*, emphasis ours)

According to Christ Himself, He is man in nature or state of being. Notice that Christ taught the truth He heard from God showing that He indeed is different from the true God. Thus, those who preach that Christ is not man in nature or state

His word. What are some examples among so many that illustrate the validity and veracity of God's words? As stated in the Gospel of Matthew in 24:6-8, through our Lord Jesus Christ, God prophesied of world wars, famines, poverty, and earthquakes that would occur (and have already been fulfilled) and continue to occur in this present time. God also made known that man's knowledge would progress (Dan. 12:4) and foretold that man's nature and disposition would deteriorate morally (II Tim. 3:1-5).

The significance of believing in God's words

True Christians firmly hold on to the words of God because they serve as beneficial and constructive in this life such as teaching valuable instructions throughout one's childhood, helping resolve various problems, and assisting one to overcome despair and trials brought about by life's difficulties. But there is another value in firmly believing the words of God written in the Bible. As stated:

"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:30-31, *Ibid.*)

Thus, there is an advantage in giving utmost importance to the Holy Scriptures that contain the true words of God. The Bible should serve as the basis of one's faith and in firmly believing in the words of God, one will not only be guided in this life but more significantly be led to the life to come which is everlasting or eternal life.

An all-time truth: absolute oneness of God

By ERVIN M. ALMEDINA

SEEKING THE TRUE GOD is indispensable for man to attain salvation. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself teaches this most important truth: "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3, *New King James Version*).

Thus, it is of utmost importance to find out the truth, that is, the true teachings about God. Nowadays, there are many self-professing believers of Christ with a variety of beliefs about God. Catholics and many Protestant sects believe in a Triune God, a God composed of three persons namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Jehovah's Witnesses group teaches that there are two gods, namely, the "Almighty God" and the "Mighty God." Other Protestant sects believe that the three—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—are only one God. Many also claim that Jesus is God. And there are those who even argue that the more true Gods one recognizes, the better. But how many Gods does the Bible teach? For us not to be led astray from the truth, let the Bible speak for itself.

God of the Old Testament

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1, *Ibid.*).

The first book, chapter, and verse of the Bible give us the glaring truth about God's absolute oneness. And this one God is the Father (Mal. 2:10, *Ibid.*), the only one God who created the heavens and the earth, and He said:

"I alone stretched out the heavens; when I made the earth, no one helped me." (Isa. 44:24, *Todays English Version*)

He Himself told the prophet Moses:

"I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (Exod. 3:6, *Ibid.*)

Thus, since the olden times, the time of the Patriarchs and the time of the Prophets, there has been only one God. The Israelites adhered to that belief (Isa. 64:4, 8) and by upholding this, they strongly opposed the worship of other gods (Exod. 20:3-5), as God commanded them:

"Worship no god but me." (Deut. 5:7, *Today's English Version*)

When God speaks, He alone is speaking:

"And *there* is no other God besides Me ... *There* is none besides Me." (Isa. 45:21, *NKJV*)

He is not speaking as one God amongst three or more, as the Trinity doctrine prescribes, or other false teachings suggest. God Himself also emphasized His absolute oneness when He declared:

The basis of the Christian faith

By RONNIE C. GONZALES

IT IS COMMONPLACE for people to seek for a reliable guide to morality and scriptural authority to serve as the foundation for their beliefs and basis of their faith. There are, however, adherents of various religions in the world who prefer certain scripture to serve as the basis of their faith. But for the members of the Church Of Christ, they believe that the Bible is the supreme scriptural authority in the realm of faith. Although the Bible is widely accepted by major religions of the world, especially Christianity and Judaism, and is considered to be the best-selling book of all time, and has been a key influence on history, art, and literature as well as inspired some of the great monuments of human thought, for true and devoted Christians, the Bible is more than that, for they firmly believe that the very words of God are written in this sacred book.

Revealing God's words to mankind

God first made His words known to man verbally when He spoke in various times and various ways (Heb. 1:1-2) and consequently, commanded His servants to write them down in a book (Jer. 30:2) and likewise guided them from committing errors (Rev. 10:4) in order for His words to be preserved for generations to come. Although we are familiar with the widely-used term "Bible", what is this book called in its entirety? This is what Apostle Paul states:

"And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (II Tim. 3:15-17, *New King James Version*)

Why is the Bible given the plural term "Holy Scriptures" when it is in actuality one single book? The English word Bible is from the Latin *Biblia*, ultimately from Koine Greek τὰ βιβλία which means "the books". The Holy Scriptures are divided into two main sections, the Old Testament comprising 39 books and the New Testament containing 27 books. Why do Christians highly regard the Bible above any other scripture as the true words of God? As declared by the Apostle Paul, "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Since the Bible was inspired by its author Who is none other than God, it can be concluded that the words contained within are indeed His words.

The quality of God's words

Words are viewed by people in different ways. Some regard them as a combination of speech sounds having meaning, terms that are used to describe or convey a thought, or written or verbal symbols that constitute the basic unit of language or human communication. However, we must understand that the words of man gravely differ from the words of God, for the latter sanctifies man as taught by the Lord Jesus Christ, thus:

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (John 17:17, *Ibid.*)

Why are the words of God said to be the truth? This is what God Himself states:

"Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken *it*; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed *it*; I will also do it." (Isa. 46:11, *Ibid.*)

Whatever God says or declares, He will surely do it and fulfill it. The word of man cannot always be realized and is many times proven false whereas the word of God is considered the truth because He will do what He says and fulfill

The organization for the married

In November 1962, there was a gathering of parents and married brethren in the Church, most of whom held duties in the KMP. For the first time, they expressed their desire to have an organization for older members in the Church. In December 1962, Brother Eraño Manalo announced that Brother Felix Manalo gave a nod to the idea of forming the organization *Buklod ng Gintong Layunin* or (Bond of Golden Purpose) or simply *Buklod*. It was launched as a pilot project in the Tayuman Local Congregation. The organization was even more strengthened by the Church Administration, after seeing the remarkable enthusiasm and zeal of the officers from Tayuman.

The constitution of the organization was formalized in July 1963. The constitution contains their golden purpose and duties as an organization. The following duties are stated in the constitution:

- To be noble parents and elders inside the Church.
- To uphold the brotherhood.
- To help the brethren find stable and proper sources of living; and the purpose of each CFO, to uphold the members and to give glory to our Almighty God.

Strengthening the CFOs

To reinforce the vital roles of the CFOs in upholding the members toward spiritual maturity, the current Executive Minister of the Church, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, appointed in April 2010, Brother Angelo Eraño V. Manalo as coordinator for the Christian family organizations. Thereupon, a minister was assigned as a CFO overseer in every district and local congregation to all the more strengthen the organizations.

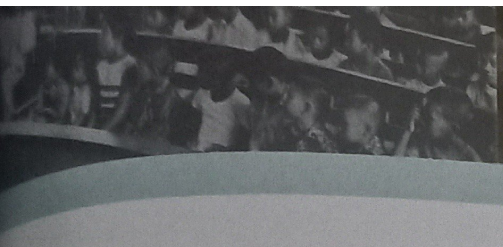
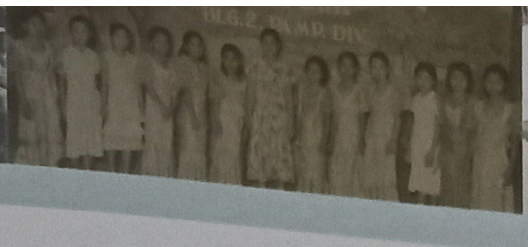
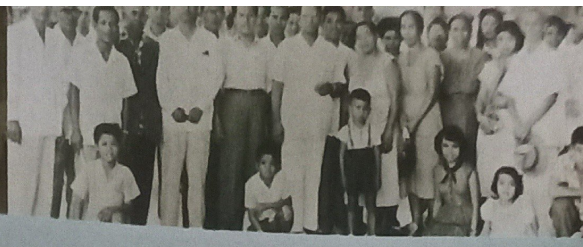
To uphold not only the family itself but also to unite the families in the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* amidst a modern society, the CFOs launched various activities for the members of the family—activities like sports, and those that enhance the brethren's talents in visual and performing arts. These include:

- **INC Unity Games**: a multi-sport, multi-district event that promote love and unity among brethren
- **INC Life**: an interactive visual exhibit which offers an engaging glimpse of the Church's history
- **INCinema**: a production and screening of filmed stage play performances by the brethren from the Church's ecclesiastical districts. The best INCinema works are recognized during the **Excellence in Visual Media Awards**. Brethren from the PNK (CWS) can also develop and showcase their talents in acting through **INCinemaJr**.
- **INConcert**: a musical presentation showcasing original songs and compositions of the brethren that convey their experiences, the pristine values they uphold, and their uncompromising faith and obedience.
- **Band Together**: an activity of the CFOs for the purpose of contributing Christian music to be used during activities of the Church and to cultivate the talents of the brethren and original song writing.

The propagation and edification of the Church, once a golden dream, is now a reality. The solid core of the Church is the Administration, followed by families continuously edified in their faith.

As we continue to sojourn in this wicked world, may God's truth be the armor of every Christian family:

"The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light." (Rom. 13:12, *New International Version*).

A century of families faithful to God

The *Iglesia Ni Cristo* Christian family organizations

By GLADY C. GADDI and SAMUEL T. SOLANO

ONE OF THE most susceptible unit to the moral degradation and the worsening condition of society is the family. It is subject to deception and evil, unless its foundation is strong and with steadfast faith. The family should be one. A whole. Safeguarded and upheld. The Church Administration, being aware of this, formed the Christian family organizations.

Birth of the Christian family organizations

During the early years of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, the Messenger was not alone. By his side were the members from all walks of life. Then the Church Administration started to form family organizations for the betterment of the members of the Church. These organizations are now known as Christian family organizations or CFOs.

The *Pagsamba Ng Kabataan*

Brother Felix began fortifying, not only the Christian families, but also the young children of the brethren who are the future of the Church, by teaching them through the establishment of the *Pagsamba Ng Kabataan* (PNK) or children's worship service (CWS) in 1918. Young worshipers, aged four to twelve, were taught the words of God using a method easier for them to comprehend—the method of question-and-answer. Because of this, before children of the Church undergo formal doctrinal lessons and baptism, they have been already trained, not only to perfom their most important duty to God—to constantly worship Him, but also to take responsibilities at an early age by holding different Church offices in the PNK.

Organizations for the youth

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, the *Tambuli ng Silangan* (Clarion of the East) was organized, with the objective to unify the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* youths. The organization started in 1935, and ended in 1936. Though short-lived, the aims of the pre-war union of the INC youths were: first, to guide one another in leading spiritual lives; second, to mold the young hearts in holiness and humility.

After the Second World War, the youth asked for a revival of the youth organization that existed before the war (*Tambuli ng Silangan*), hence, the birth of the *Kapisanang Maligayang Pagtatagumpay* (KMP). In 1949, actions to reunite the youths were undertaken. Every one waited until the country was back on its feet, after being shaken by the war. From 1953-1973, all unmarried members of the Church, regardless of their age bracket, belonged to the KMP.

In October 1973, the *Kabataang May Diwang Wagas* or (Youth with Noble Intent) *KADIWA* was launched by then Executive Minister Brother Eraño G. Manalo. Unmarried brethren aged 18 and above belong to this organization. On that same year, the *Binhi* (Seed) organization was established for brethren aged 12-17.

The constitution and by-laws of the *KADIWA* and *Binhi* states the apparent purpose and duties. These include:

- To make them effective instruments in disseminating the faith.
- To inculcate in them the importance of education for their betterment and for their future stability.
- To unite all the young members of the Church to prevent them from marrying unbelievers.

The youth sector of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* plays a crucial role for the fortified future of the Church. From this group will come the next leaders who will continue to help in overseeing the Church, to keep the torch fiery, and hearts ablaze with faith.

more follow the commandments of our Almighty God.

God Almighty commands us through Apostle Paul thus:

"Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days." (Eph. 5:16, *New Living Translation*)

We must do good or obey the words of God (Rom. 7:12, *Today's English Version*) at all times even as wickedness is around us, and we must not be overpowered by evil. God wants us to walk the straight path, obeying all of His commandments and living by His words. We should take a stand to do good and serve as the light of this wicked world for us to be blessed by God. We should always remember that we stand to gain if we obey wholeheartedly God's commandments thus:

"Therefore '*Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.*'" (II Cor. 6:17-18, *New King James Version*)

Parents should train their children

Parents are instructed by the Creator to provide for the basic needs of their children, such as their proper education, shelter, and food. Above all these, God gave a clear instruction when it comes to obeying His words as written in the first letter of Apostle Paul to Timothy:

"Physical training is good but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come." (I Tim. 4:8, *NLT*)

Christian parents are instructed to monitor their children that even at a very young age, they must always follow the words of God so that when they grow up, they will not depart from it:

"Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6, *NKJV*)

Children who are raised properly through God's words become successful not only in their chosen field but most of all are very active officers inside the Church. They do not only excel in their job or studies but they see to it that their performance of their duty is their utmost priority.

God's promise

Living in this world is not always smooth sailing especially that economic crisis is experienced almost by all nations. We also see calamities which are so devastating, rendering a lot of people helpless.

For the faithful who trust God, He had promised them that He will be their protector and in times of disasters He will always be ready to help them:

"You have made the Lord your defender, the Most High your protector, and so no disaster will strike you, no violence will come near your home." (Ps. 91:9-10, *TEV*)

God did not only offer His protection to those who trust Him but He also promised that He will answer the prayers of His people and even give them long life (Ps. 91:15-16, *Ibid.*).

The conviction of Church Of Christ families

Even if this world succumbs to many hardships, trials, catastrophes (natural or manmade), where many people are drawn to not believe in God anymore, making them inactive in worshiping Him, Church Of Christ families will not stop instead all the more worship, praise, and serve the Creator (Josh. 24:15, *Ibid.*). We will be the spark of hope in a room of grief, peace in times of war, and not be like the people of this earth. We will keep away from all wickedness and unrighteousness.

The home where training starts

The home is the beginning of everything. All that is learned at home will be reflected, especially, on the child. Families inside the Church Of Christ must be the first ones to live righteously. And it should start in our home. As parents, we must train our children in godliness rather than the ways of the world. We must train our children from their early childhood to be faithful and to worship God, so they will not depart from it when they are old. Our household should learn to put its fervent faith and trust in Him. As we learn things about the earth and its creatures and get a good education, we should understand that what is more important is to learn to fully entrust our lives to God.

The Church, the vanguard of faith

We have seen how the Church grew from being small and feeble to its glorious and respectable stature now. We believe it is God's handiwork. He is the One who made it possible and we should not forget it. We ought to open our children's eyes, hearts, and minds so that they may also trust and revere Him and be able to say:

"I have decided to obey your laws until the day I die." (Ps. 119:112, *Ibid.*)

This must be the conviction of each member of the Church Of Christ. Let us continue to sojourn this wicked world with unfaltering faith in God, walk the path of righteousness, so that come Judgment Day, we will be saved.

The family that has God's blessings

By GLADY C. GADDI

ANY OBSERVANT INDIVIDUAL could say that we live in a troubled world. Violence is rampant. Crimes of all sorts are common. They are committed every day. We see them on television. We read about them in the newspaper. They are committed everywhere, even in the homes where the well-being of individuals supposedly is to be safeguarded. Indeed, no one is safe nowadays.

God's commandment

Sadly, despite the efforts to curb the incidence of crime, it goes unchecked. Although lots of wrongdoers have been made to answer for their deeds, still, wickedness, in various forms, continues to thrive. It continues to exist. Perpetrators of evil continue to be on the rise. As members of the Church Of Christ, we must not submit to the ways of this world; rather, we must all the

Our household should learn to put our fervent faith and trust in Him. As we learn things about the earth and its creatures and get a good education, we should understand that what is more important is to learn to fully entrust our lives to God.

from the *Kapisanan ng mga Broadkaster sa Pilipinas* (KBP), the association of Philippine broadcasting agencies.

Technology-wise, INC Radio or DZEM has also kept abreast with the times. Aside from powering up its transmission signal through constant system upgrades, the station has also crossed the information highway. It now maintains a website that features live video streaming. It also maintains a wide social media presence through its channels in YouTube, Facebook, and other social networking sites. INC Radio even has its own mobile app which can be downloaded and installed in Android devices.

Television. The Church's initial venture in TV production was the program *Ang Iglesia Ni Cristo* (The Church Of Christ), which premiered in Philippine television on February 13, 1983. It was initially aired weekly on *Maharlika* Broadcasting Station's Channel 4 (now known as PTV 4) and on RPN 9 until 1990, before moving to ABS-CBN 2 till early 2000.

With the success of Ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, the Church produced more programs that were shown in other TV stations. Among them were *Gabay sa Mabuting Asal* (Guide to Good Manners) and the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* and the Bible, which first aired on local stations GMA-7 and IBC-13, respectively. When EBC opened its TV station Net 25 in 2000, it also aired these religious programs along with a slew of new shows also produced by the Church's Department of Evangelism.

Not to be confined to Philippine TV, the Church's programs soon branched out to the international scene, beginning with "The Message" which was aired on station KSCI in Southern California on July 27, 1987. Through Cable TV, the Church's program reached viewers from other parts of the USA and of the world by the turn of the 21st century.

From producing TV programs for other networks, the Church moved on to establishing its own television station. In 2005, the Christian Era Broadcasting Service Incorporated launched its flagship TV station, UHF Channel 49, which was carried internationally by DirecTV and locally by major Philippine cable service providers. Initially named as GEM-TV, it was rebranded as *Iglesia Ni Cristo* Television or INCTV 49 in October 2012, signifying a more straightforward positioning as the official TV station of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Along with this move came the introduction of new shows with fresh, innovative formats as well as the re-launching of the original, well-loved programs.

With programs like Executive News, INCTV today has become the go-to channel for those eager to know the latest updates about the fast-paced activities of the Church Administration as led by the Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo. It has proven to be successful in connecting the lives of Church members from different places and origins, whether through music as in the case of the shows CMV by Request and INConcert series, or through a common cause, such as with the special live coverage of the Worldwide Walk for those affected by Typhoon Yolanda. Its gospel programs that have versions in foreign languages and dialects reach out to truth-seekers from across the globe. True to its slogan, INCTV exists to propagate the message of salvation that those who are far from it may be enlightened and those who have embraced it may never lose it anymore.

New Media. Since the dawn of the Internet and related technologies, the Church Of Christ has been carefully exploring the prospects of using the new media in spreading the true gospel to many others and edifying the faith of its own members. Under the leadership of Brother Eduardo Manalo, among the measures that have been undertaken by the Church in recent times were (1) the expanded use of videoconferencing for special gatherings (see page 94); (2) the creation of official web portal iglesianicristo.net and websites such as incmedia.org and kabayankokapatidko.org; (3) the establishment of the Alliance of Computer Technology and Information Volunteers (ACTIV); and (4) the conception of social media channels for the Church's internal organizations, public campaigns and special events, such as the official Facebook pages for the Christian Association for the Deaf, the Worldwide Walk for those affected by Typhoon Yolanda, and the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* Centennial Celebration.

Many other such developments can be expected in the time to come as the Church carries on with its mission to proclaim to the whole world the gospel of salvation until the very end.

In God's perfect time

The advancement in information and communication technology which has redefined mass media since the 20th century is in fulfillment of what God appointed that human knowledge would increase as the end of time draws near (Dan. 12:4). During such time called "ends of the earth", God also appointed that His chosen people would emerge to proclaim His righteousness, never to keep silent until salvation shines like a blazing torch (Isa. 60:11-12, 1). Thus, the Church Of Christ in these last days strives to make use of all available media resources for God's work of salvation so that "the gospel of the kingdom," says the Lord Jesus Christ, "will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14, *New International Version*).

circulation, which is currently by the hundreds of thousands, distributed all over the world.

More importantly, the magazine has proven to be a useful tool in disseminating the true Christian faith to nonmembers, and in providing Church information updates to the members. Not a few converts have shared their experiences on how the magazine piqued their curiosity, leading them to examine the Church's beliefs and eventually be baptized into it. Many members have also attested that the magazine has helped them appreciate further their faith, such as through the Convert Stories or Inspiring Lives articles that they found to be relatable to their own experiences and the reports and essays about the Executive Minister's pastoral visitations, which contain excerpts from the preaching of the beloved Presiding Elder.

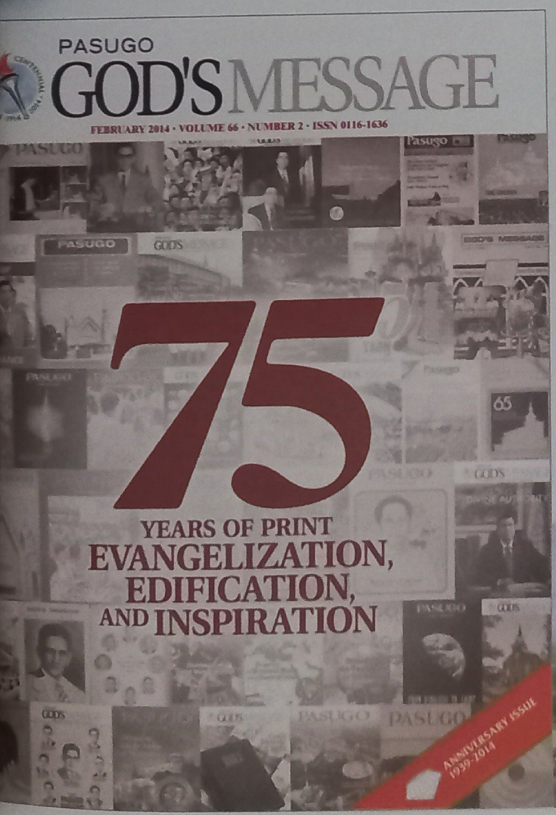
Thus, even in this digital age, the *Pasugo: God's Message* magazine and other Church publications, such as pamphlets, leaflets, and fliers for mass distribution, still remain relevant to the faithfuls' spiritual life, for such printed materials fill their need for tangible information resources that are valuable for both evangelism and edification.

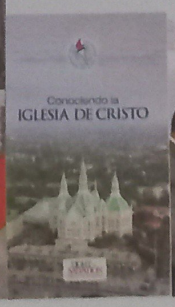
Radio. The Church's first foray into radio evangelism took place in early 1968 through religious programs like *Daan ng Buhay* (Way to Life) and *Biblia o Kuro-kuro*? (Bible or Opinion?) that were aired over DZEC, a radio station operated by Eagle Broadcasting Corporation (EBC), a business group composed of lay Church members. EBC marketed DZEC as the "radio for the family." But the Church's religious programs that it aired easily gained a following among listeners eager to learn the truth. Hence, although classified as a commercial station, DZEC came to be identified with the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*.

Upon the approval of Brother Eraño G. Manalo, the Church launched its own religious radio station purely dedicated to its spiritual ends about a year later. Thus, DZEM was born into the airwaves on February 10, 1969. Operated by the Christian Era Broadcasting Service (CEBS), the Church's broadcast arm, its programming mainly consists of Bible seminars on air, in which a minister would expound on lessons about the basic teachings of the Church. For variety, the Church's radio station also features music and entertainment programs as well as informative shows, which, over the years, have attracted a host of avid listeners and have gained the respect of many government and non-government agencies as well as the Philippine broadcast industry.

In the past decade alone, among the recognitions that DZEM received were those from the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation, Inc., the Department of Science and Technology, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor through the programs Breakfast on Board, Journey to Discovery, and BIP (*Balita, Impormasyon, at Paalala*) sa Hapon in 2009. It also garnered the DSWD's *Gawad Ulat* Award in 2011, an honor bestowed on individuals and organizations for their volunteerism in helping the disadvantaged. Just last May this year, the radio station now better known with the monicker "INC Radio", brought home a slew of awards

The Church Of Christ in these last days strives to make use of all available media resources for God's work of salvation so that "the gospel of the kingdom," says the Lord Jesus Christ, "will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come".





Media and Christian faith

The *Iglesia Ni Cristo*'s media initiatives for evangelism and edification

By MARLEX C. CANTOR

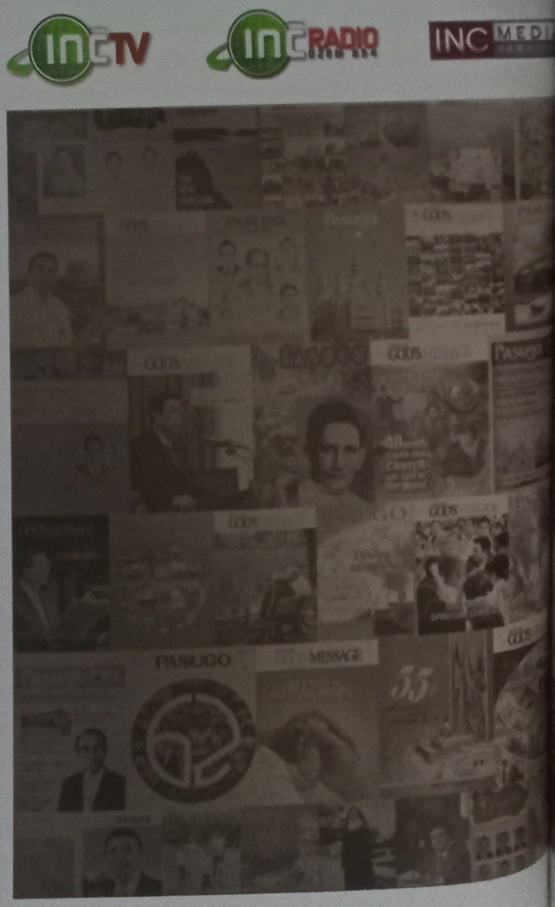
IN ITS MISSION to communicate the true gospel to as many people as possible, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (INC) or Church Of Christ discerningly makes use of the media—from the traditional mass media of print, radio, and television to the so-called "new media" such as the Internet and social media. Over the years, the Church has sought to put into good use the technological advancements that have enhanced such communication channels and broadened their audience reach.

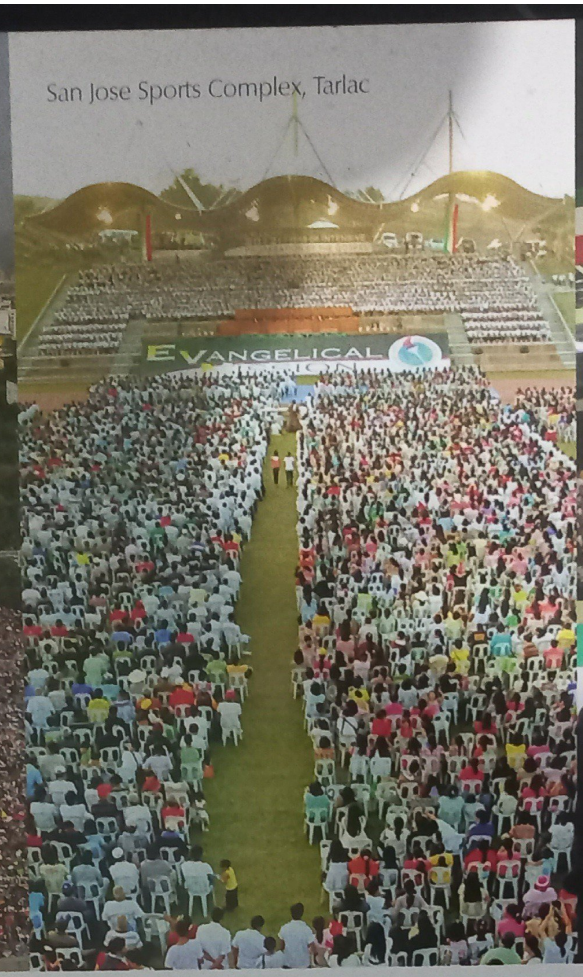
What follows is an overview of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*'s media utilization for its propagation and edification campaigns.

Print. When the first issue of *Ang Pasugo* came out in 1939, it had an all-Tagalog line-up of articles, some news reports and a few photos, and was printed on brownish news print paper. Except for the cover, all else was in black-and-white. Through the years, however, the advent of computerization, the invention of desktop publishing, and modern breakthroughs in photography and printing have paved the way for many welcome improvements in the magazine's look and feel. Thus, today, when one turns the pages of *Pasugo: Gods Message*, he sees a volume of writings and photos in living color, reader-friendly layout, and attractive design printed on glossy cover on the outside and clear, white matte paper inside and above all, the true message for man's salvation.

Since 1953, the magazine has used the English language as a medium. It even came out with an international edition, *God's Message*, in 1978. These measures were geared to reaching out to a global readership, which was only timely, for the Church was then starting to head towards worldwide expansion. In recent times, the magazine has published articles in other world languages—Spanish, German, and Japanese, among others.

Being in print for 75 years now, the Church's prime vehicle for its print evangelism, which is the brainchild of Brother Felix Y. Manalo, God's Messenger in these last days, can claim the distinction of being one of, if not, the longest running Philippine religious publication. It can also be among those with the largest





God commands to His servants is to "save others" (*Today's English Version*) by means of "snatching them from the flames of judgment" (*New Living Translation*). To be saved on Judgment Day, people need first to "come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim 2:4). The truth are God's words written in the Holy Scriptures which give man the wisdom that leads to salvation (John 17:17; II Tim. 3:14-15, *TEV*). Hence, the fruitful branches of the vine are the members of the Church Of Christ who help in making known to all people God's message of salvation.

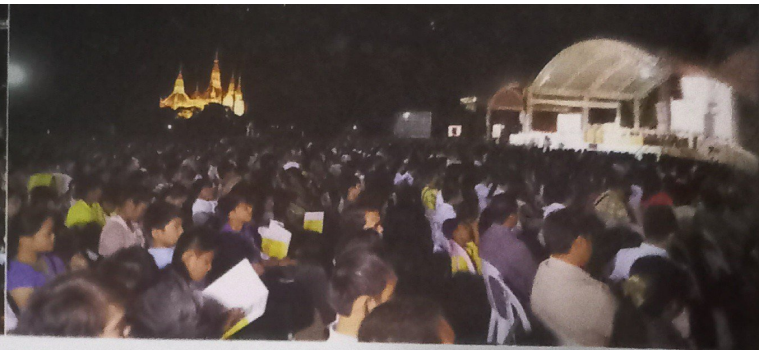
The Church never ceases to proclaim the true gospel to one and all. From Bible studies in the brethren's homes to the evangelical missions staged in the houses of worship and in huge public venues, the true gospel is preached by the ministers and workers of the gospel. With the use of print and broadcast media as well as the Internet, the Church is able to disseminate the true Christian faith in a much broader spectrum (See article "Media and Christian Faith").

Church officers and members help out by inviting many others to listen to the preaching of God's words. This is reminiscent of what was done by the ancient Christians as recorded in the New Testament. This was done by the Samaritan woman who after talking with the Lord Jesus Christ left her water jar and went out her way to invite the townspeople to hear the words of the Savior. Her testimony led many Samaritans to believe and have faith in Christ (John 4:28-30, 39). Like her, Cornelius, centurion of the Italian Regiment, was not yet even baptized when he gathered his neighbors and friends to join him and his family in listening to the gospel as preached by the Apostle Peter (Acts 10:1, 24).

Fruit bearing, however, does not end in having people merely hear God's words. To be saved, those who listen to the gospel need also to believe and be baptized in the body or Church Of Christ (Mark 16:16; I Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:18). True enough, when the Lord Jesus said His chosen servants "should go and bear fruit", He also told them "your fruit should remain" (John 15:16).

Abundant fruit bearing, then, takes much diligence, faith, endurance, steadfast hope and love. "For if these qualities are yours and are increasing," says Apostle Peter, "they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:8, *Holman Christian Standard Bible*).

Actively taking part in missionary work is never a loss on the part of the fruitful branches of Christ. All the efforts and sacrifices that they pour into it will not go unrewarded. Even in this life, they can expect to receive the things they ask from God (John 15:16). Most of all, they are ensured of having their names written in the Book of Life—they are certain of being saved on Judgment Day (Phil. 4:3; Dan. 12:1). ●



Abundant fruit bearing: vital for salvation

By MARLEX C. CANTOR

SINCE DAY ONE, the work of propagating the gospel has been ardently upheld by the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* or Church Of Christ in these last days. Now that the Church has reached its 100 years of re-emergence in the Far East, the commitment to spread the true message of salvation is being carried on more intensively by the present Church Administration, with the Executive Minister himself, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, enjoining the members worldwide in the current campaign for Abundant Fruit Bearing.

This invigorated missionary initiative that was launched in February 2014—preluding the Centennial Celebration—has drawn an enthusiastic response from brethren the world over. Indeed, the call for Abundant Fruit Bearing hits a familiar cord in the hearts of the faithful Church Of Christ members, for it bespeaks of their reason for being—the purpose of their being called by God in sacred union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Of His disciples or the members of His Church, the Savior declared:

"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain ..." (John 15:16, *New King James Version*)

Christ likened His union with the members of His Church to that of a vine and its branches—an illustration that emphasizes not only the cohesive bond between Christ and the members of His one true Church but also the responsibility that goes with it. As a branch that is firmly connected to the vine produces much fruit, so does every member of the Church Of Christ who is expected to bear abundant fruit to remain connected to Christ:

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who remains with me and I with him, will bear abundant fruit; for without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5, *Lamsa Translation*)

Hence, abundant fruit bearing is a must for true Christians. It is vital for their salvation. Underscoring this, Christ stated:

"Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he cuts off ... Unless a man remains with me, he will be cast outside, like a branch which is withered; which they pick up and throw into the fire to be burned." (John 15:2, 6, *Ibid.*)

To be fruitful is to bear fruits of righteousness or holiness (Rom. 7:4). In Jude 1:23, a righteous deed that

Eduardo V. Manalo utilized for the Church's fullest advantage what modern architecture and technology can do. The brethren witnessed this during the worship service he officiated at and was attended by more than 11, 000 members who were accommodated in the Temple and the Tabernakulo (Tabernacle) in the local congregation of Templo Central on July 5, 2014. On this occasion, the 20-ton, one-of-a-kind pipe organ accompanied the choir members in their robes with its "powerful and majestic" sounds while singing hymns of praises. Also used on the said congregational gathering, were the three units of Light Emitting Diode (LED) Wall with high resolution that had been previously installed—one for the main nave, one each for the right wing and the left wing—to enable worshipers to see more visibly the preachers and the hymn lyrics as they sing with the choir leading them.

Prior to this occasion which coincided with the 30th anniversary of the Templo Central (Central Temple), the main portion of the Temple had to undergo architectural renovations to house the custom-made 3,162 special individual silver-colored pipes carefully and patiently packed and shipped from the US by A. E. Schlueter Pipe Organ Company. It took the company team led by its president and founder Arthur Schlueter Jr. 14 months to install the special and delicate organ pipes that are made of temperature-sensitive lead. These pipes are of various sizes, the longest of which is 23 feet and the shortest is 8 inches long.

The Executive Minister noted in his homily that what has been inspiring the true servants of God in always striving the best in worshiping God is what His prophet declared:

"... And those in the east will respond with praise. Hear them singing to the Lord from the ends of earth, singing glory to the Righteous One!" (Isa. 24:15, *Living Bible*)

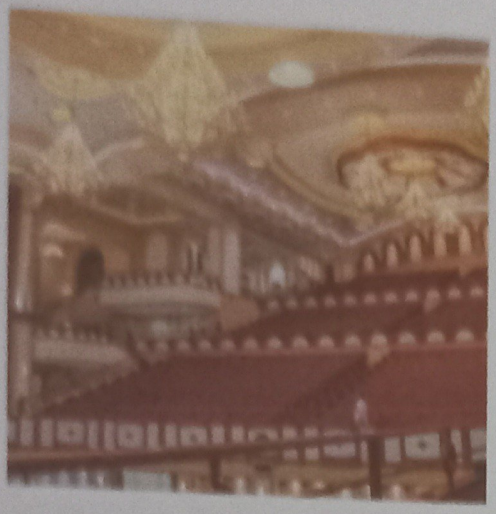
The new Capitol Local Congregation house of worship

In God's time the 3,000-seater with a three-level balcony house of worship now stands in all its splendor along Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines. The first of its kind with more than 50 spires ornamenting the greyish-blue edifice, both commuters and residents of the place, more often than not, would look at it in admiration for its Neo-Gothic architectural structure design.

Adorning the house of worship are two main chandeliers and secondary chandeliers along the side aisles in the main nave, and three in the lobby which are made of specialized crystal; these and all other interior lights including the continuous "rope" lighting are LED. It is accented with granite and burgundy wood finish while stained glass windows in shades of blue, green, and amber enhance its walls. The house of worship is the first one to have a separate two-level parking structure beside it and a basement parking beneath the worship building's foundation accommodating 150 vehicles.

The house of worship was dedicated to God on July 19, 2014 during the worship service officiated by the Church Executive Minister Brother Eduardo Manalo, and the momentous occasion was attended by thousands of brethren, those registered in the local congregation and those from the ecclesiastical districts of Metro Manila as well as from the nearby districts.

Indeed, the fervent desire of the Church to accord God Almighty the highest level of respect and love, that is, to love Him above all and to continuously fulfil its most sacred duty to worship and serve Him is the moving force to use architecture for a truly divine purpose.



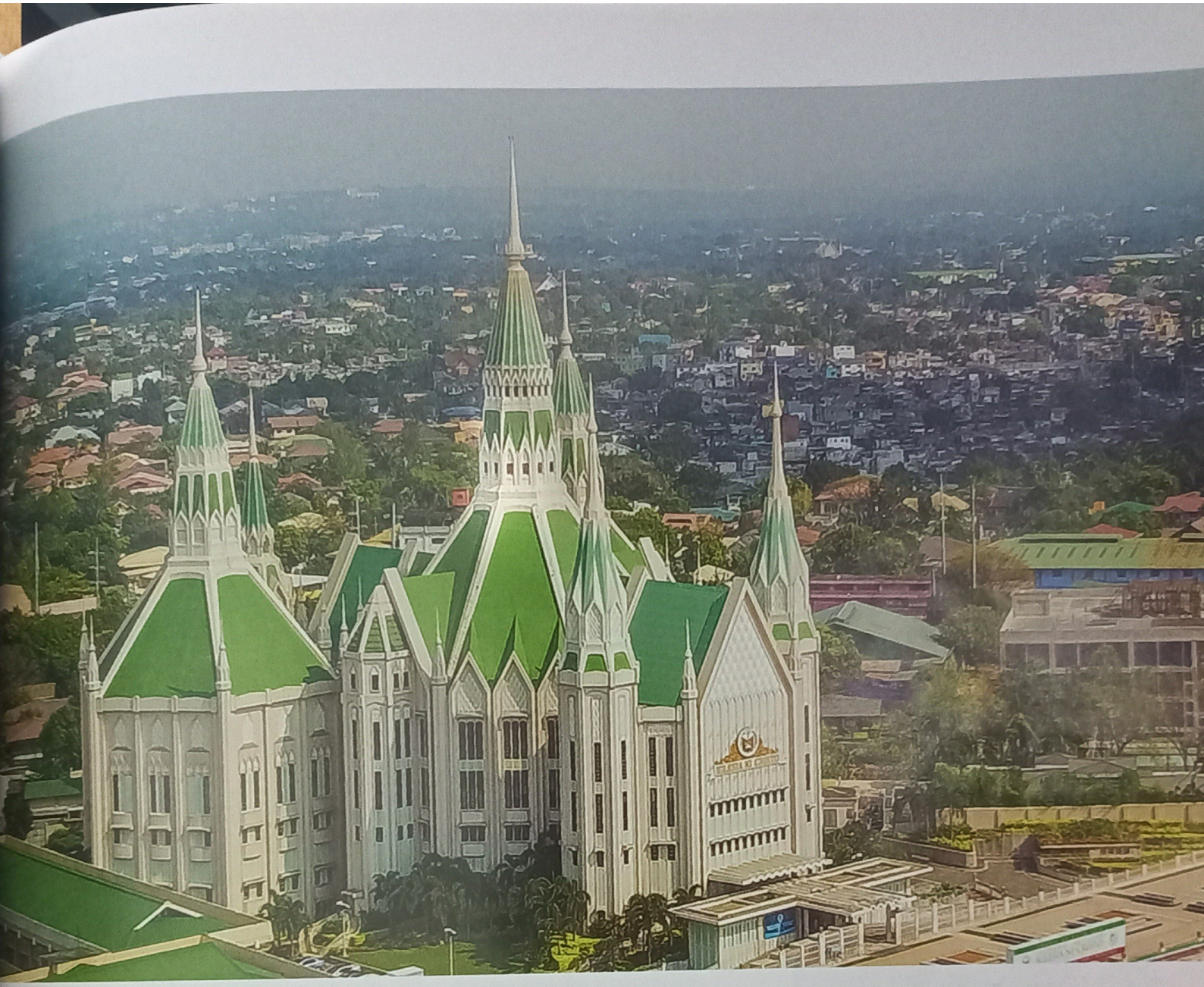
The splendid blend of science and art as distinct feature of the 3,000-seater newly dedicated Capitol Local Congregation house of worship (right) shown in its three-level balcony, ceiling, and stairs (above).

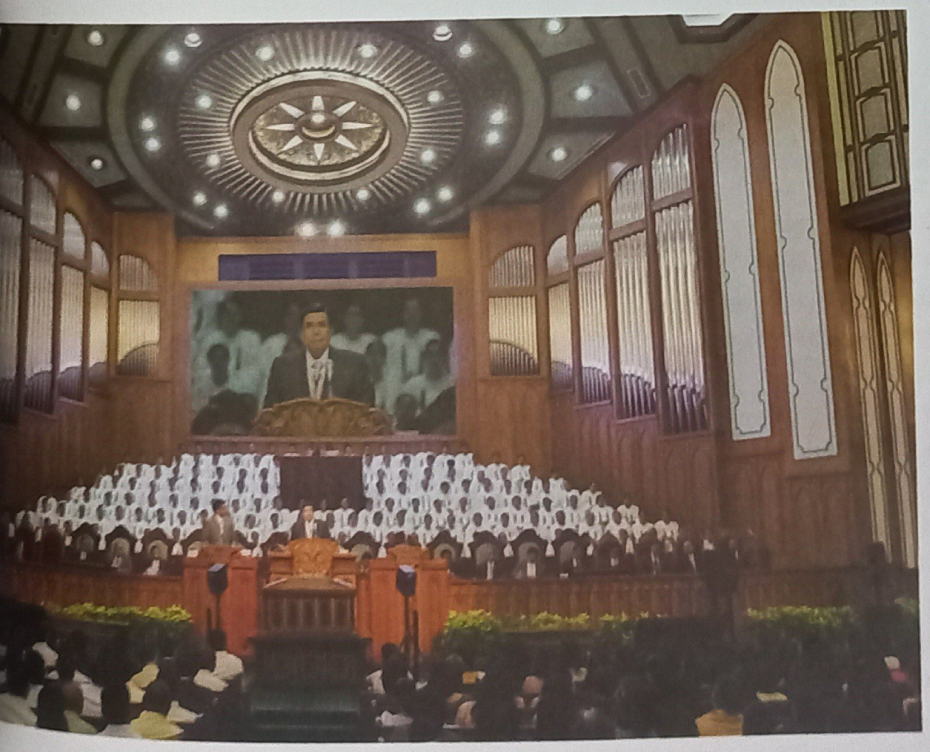
in these last days. It was intended to be a wonderful Temple for it is written:

"The temple I am going to build will be great, because our God is greater than all other gods. (II Chr. 2:5, *Today's New International Version*)

Second, hundreds or thousands of brethren from all walks of life—students, professionals and laborers, parents and children, young and old alike—frequent the house of prayer to do their devotional prayers to seek God's guidance and help for them to live a life that is in accordance to His will. And third, on certain occasions, the Temple has been the place where other religious affairs are held like evangelical missions, gatherings for Church officers, wedding ceremonies among others.

It is in this temple where the current Executive Minister, Brother





The 3-decade old *Iglesia Ni Cristo Templo Central* (Central Temple) (top) upkeeping prominently its architectural characteristics; the congregational worship service, officiated at by the Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo Manalo, when the newly installed pipe organ was first used (left); the pipe organ keyboard (above).

The *Iglesia Ni Cristo* architecture: using the science and art for a truly divine purpose

By CELERINO G. BACLAAN

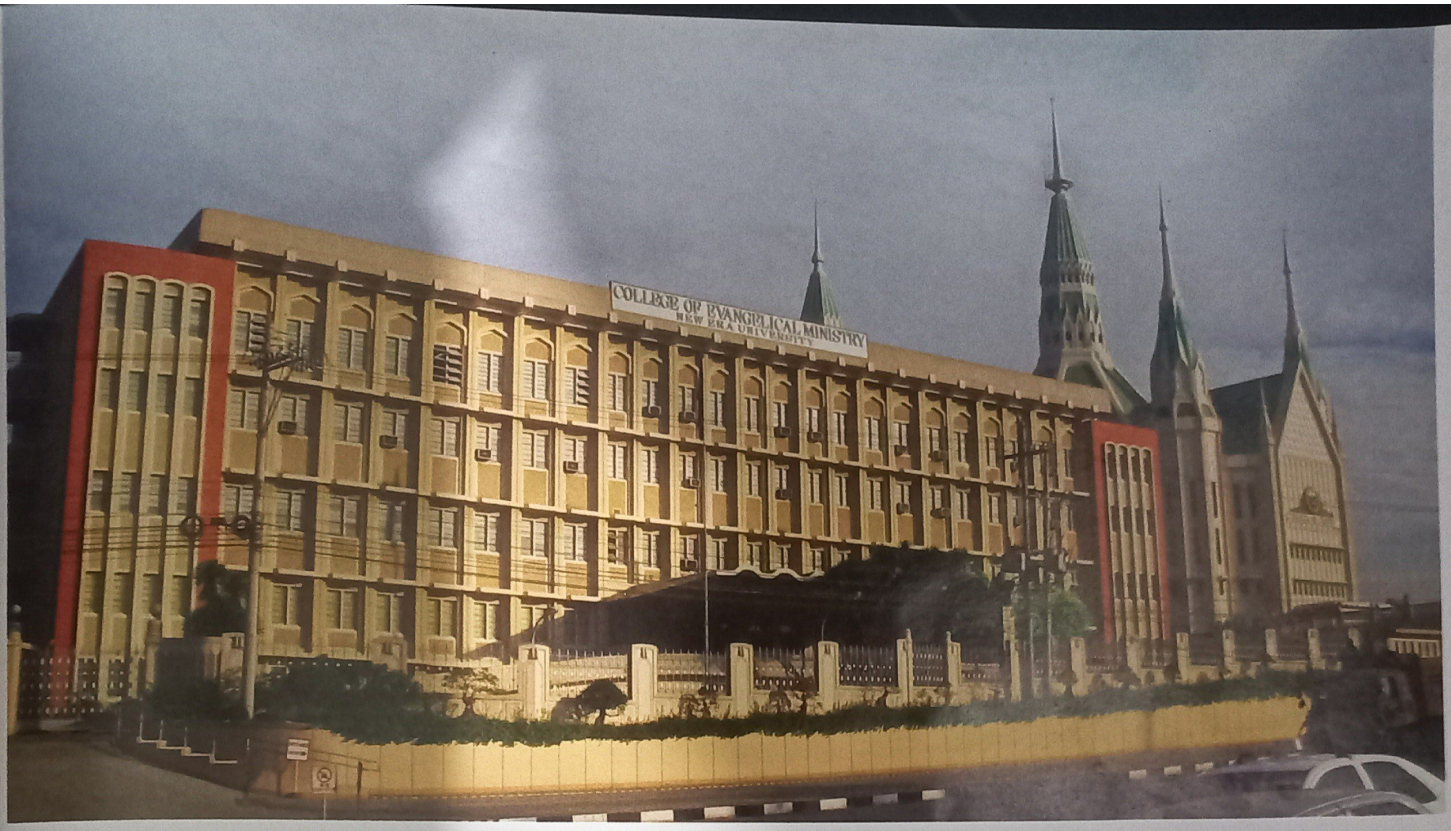
FOR THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, God's people in these last days, the house of worship is the most significant place, for it is where they hold their most sacred gathering, the congregational worship service—the heart of their spiritual life. Throughout the years of its struggle against all challenges of times and circumstances, the Church has never been stopped from constructing houses of worship in many parts of the world to meet the spiritual needs of the brethren.

Fulfilling this all-time priority commitment to God Almighty, the Church has been using to its potential the science and art of architecture to realize this noble undertaking whose primary purpose is to give God honor and glory. Usually what many immediately appreciate when they look at a building is its appeal to their eyes. There are more to it though—the materials and the equipment that go into the building; dimensions and measurements, shapes, colors, and relationships that make it pleasing or beautiful to the eyes as well as a comfortable place where religious activities will be conducted; and most of all a so sacred place where God's name and glory dwell forever. These are among the essentials that the Church Administration has instructed the Church Engineering and Construction Department should always give utmost careful planning and consideration so that these structures not only can serve their divine purpose but also can withstand onslaughts of natural calamities like typhoons and earthquakes.

Two of these landmark structures of remarkable prominence are the 7,000-seater Central Temple which was dedicated to God in July 1984 and the 3,000-seater Capitol house of worship dedicated on July 19, 2014. These houses of worship which are just less than three kilometers apart from each other stand majestically at opposite sides along Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines.

The Central Temple

This most prominent sacred edifice of the Church built during the administration era of the late Executive Minister Brother Eraño G. Manalo and dedicated on the 70th anniversary of its emergence in the Philippines on July 27, 1984 has served the reason of its construction. First, it is primarily the permanent house of worship where brethren registered in the local congregation of Templo Central attend the congregational worship services and proof of the fulfilment of God's promises to His Messenger, Brother Felix Y. Manalo, and the Church Of Christ



and their whole being into the mold of a true minister.

In their third and fourth year of formal schooling, students will be assigned to different local congregations in Metro Manila and in nearby provinces where CEM has extensions for their practicum. They will spend the morning attending their ministerial and academic classes, and from the afternoon up to the evening they will be doing their fieldwork.

These school and fieldwork experiences play a significant part in the development of a student to be a useful minister in the Church.

Extensions, expansions, school for ministry

The CEM has now eight extensions in the Philippines: two in Laguna, two in Bulacan, one each in Batangas, Pampanga, Cavite, and Rizal. The college also has plans to establish regional centers in Cebu, Davao, Bacolod, Iloilo, Naga City in Camarines Sur, Santiago City in Isabela, Butuan City in Agusan del Norte, and Dagupan City in Pangasinan.

So great is the demand for more evangelical workers in other countries that the Church established an extension of the school for ministry in Sacramento, California, USA. It was inaugurated by the Executive Minister on December 30, 2013. Brother Eduardo also inaugurated a branch of the school for ministry in Rome, Italy on September 7, 2014 and in London, England on September 22, 2014. Plans are already underway for putting up a similar satellite school in Toronto, Canada.

New building

This November 4, the new CEM building will be inaugurated. The building, which indicates the growth and progress of the college, is situated within the New Era University Complex along Central Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines.

The new CEM building is double the size of the present one that is situated along Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City. It has 90 rooms that are fully air-conditioned and practice preaching rooms where students can hone their preaching skills during their spare time. It also houses the Center for Language Studies (CLS) which has its own speech laboratory and language specific rooms. Its audio-visual room can accommodate 600 to 800 persons. The gymnasium of the new CEM building has a standard-size basketball court, weights area, four badminton courts, and a table tennis area.

True to its roots

Notwithstanding these great developments, the aims of the leadership and faculty of the CEM remain firmly rooted in the vision and core values of the ministerial training set by Brother Felix Y. Manalo when he established *Ang Klase* (The Class), the schooling of would-be ministers of the Church, in Tondo, Manila in 1915.

Brother Manalo's training and teaching principles have been precisely observed throughout the history of the Church's school for ministers—since the Ministerial Institute for Development (1974), to the Evangelical College (1976), to the Institute of Evangelical Ministry (1980), and, up to the College of Evangelical Ministry (1995).

Through God's blessings and guidance, the CEM has been successful in its endeavor of molding men of excellence who will lead God's people and evangelize the world.

The CEM in the centennial year of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*

By BIENVENIDO A. SANTIAGO JR.

AFTER A HUNDRED YEARS of proclaiming the good news of salvation, the Church Of Christ shows no sign of slowing down. With Brother Eduardo V. Manalo at the helm, the Church Administration has all the more intensified the Church's worldwide propagation of the true gospel.

In just these past two years, millions of people had attended the Church's mammoth evangelical missions that were held in different places around the globe. Many of those who attended such gatherings are now members of the Church.

Intensified recruitment

To cope with the unhindered growth of the Church and keeping an eye on its welfare and future, Brother Eduardo has once again sounded God's call to all of its qualified male members around the world: serve in the ministry.

In a circular letter that was read on January 8, 2014 in all congregations of the Church, Brother Eduardo wrote: "The continuous expansion of the Church and the unceasing victories it reaps have brought about the extreme need for additional ministers and evangelical workers who will be utilized by God and by the Church Administration in preaching the gospel and in looking after the spiritual needs of the brethren."

The response to Brother Eduardo's recruitment campaign has been truly amazing, if not historic. This current school year, which coincides with the Centennial year of the Church, thousands of male brethren from different countries applied to the College of Evangelical Ministry (CEM) and have been accepted.

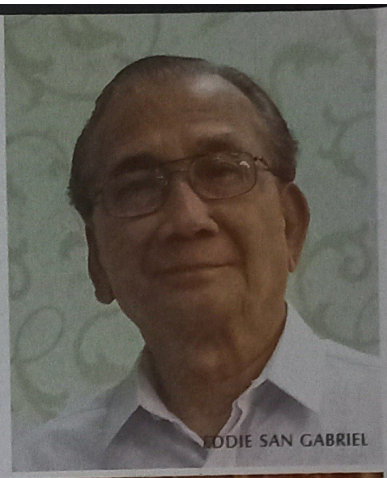
This is in stark contrast to what is happening in other religions suffering from a steep decline in numbers as seen in those entering their seminaries or theological schools.

Shift to trimestral

To keep abreast with the rapid growth of the Church and sustain the number of evangelical workers it needs, the CEM has changed its school calendar from semestral to trimestral. Thus, the Bachelor of Evangelical Ministry (BEM) program that took a student five years to complete can now be finished in four.

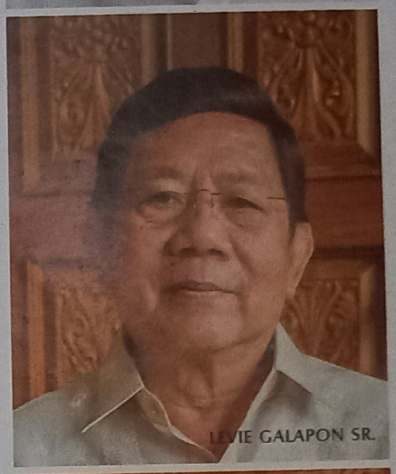
Before entering the BEM program, students are required to finish a one-year preparatory course. Thereafter, all students will be immersed in a rigid ministerial and an intense academic training to shape their personality, character,

a lot of hardships and trials, the very best solution, as he firmly believes, is to pray to God. "God is always ready to hearken to the prayers of His servants," he said. Now, Brother Eddie is the resident minister of the local congregation of Milpitas, Northern California. He was born on May 15, 1931 in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija. (*Benmar Javier*)


EDDIE SAN GABRIEL

Brother Levie Galapon Sr. (Ordained on May 10, 1961)

Brother Levie Galapon Sr. was only 18 years old when he became a regular worker and was assigned to lead a local congregation. He firmly believes the words of God written in I Timothy 4:12, which states to be a good example at all times. Now, Brother Levie has not only reached his 53 years of service to God as an ordained minister but he was also able to witness the Centennial Celebration of the Church. "I am truly grateful for these blessings from God," Brother Levie said. He was born on October 10, 1935 in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya. He is now 78 years old but he continues to teach and remind the students in the ministry the importance of following and obeying all of God's commands for them to become true ministers of God. (*Allen Rae Felipe*)


LEVIE GALAPON SR.

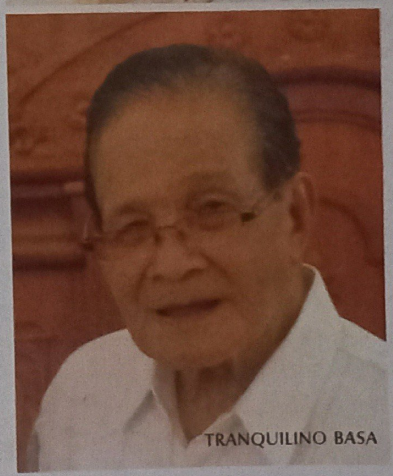
Brother Pedro dela Cruz Sr. (Ordained on May 10, 1961)

In February 1952, Brother Pedro started attending *Ang Klase* (The Class) of evangelical workers and ministers. He remembered a time he almost drowned after crossing an overflowing river when he was on his way to the local congregation of San Remigio, Antique to officiate at a worship service. "That incident has further taught to me the importance of the ministry, that whatever we may come across in fulfilling this duty, we need to brave all of them, with faith and confidence in what God can do for us," Brother Pedro said. (*Edwin Latiza*)

PEDRO DELA CRUZ SR.

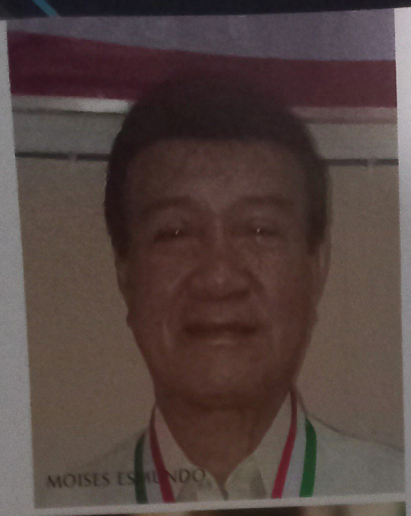
Brother Tranquilino Basa (Ordained on May 9, 1960)

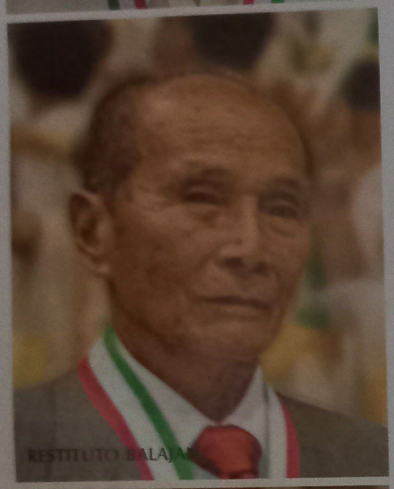
After hearing God's Messenger preach the words of God during an evangelical mission in Pangasinan, Brother Tranquilino Basa was ready to undergo the training to be a minister of God. He was fully aware that what he would fulfill is an important task in order for people to be saved. He recalled a time when he was entrusted to translate the homily of Brother Felix Y. Manalo in Ilocano so that more people would understand the lesson. "The words of God are very important. We should not only listen to them but we also need to put them into practice," Brother Tranquilino said. "Through strict obedience to the words of God, we will be able to succeed in this calling," he added. Brother Tranquilino was born on November 25, 1925 in Alaminos, Pangasinan. Now at the age of 88, he is assigned in the ecclesiastical district of Pangasinan West as *"kasangguni"* or spiritual advisor. (*Adlin Alan Bacani*)

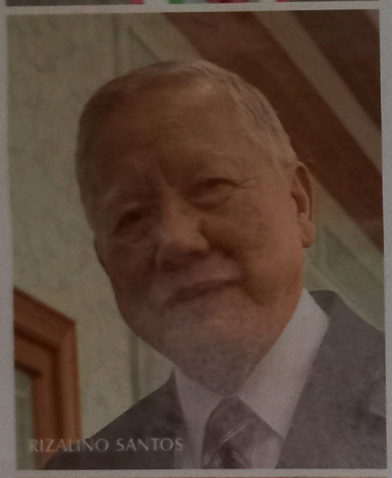

TRANQUILINO BASA

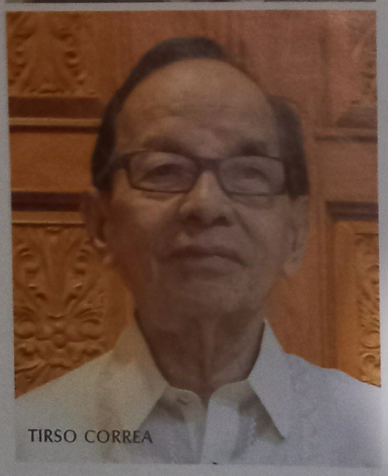
The ministers of the gospel are fully aware that on their own they will not be able to fulfill their duties. They truly acknowledge the help of God Who has called them in the ministry and the guidance of the Church Administration as the very reasons for their active service. Whatever they have done throughout their ministry, they will forever dedicate all the glory and honor to God Almighty.

Compiled by Adlin Alan Bacani with assistance from Ed Lumbao









Brother Melchor Parco (Ordained on July 14, 1964)

"It is only through the love and mercy of God that I was able to continue to perform my duties until now," Brother Melchor Parco remarked. He was born on January 6, 1931. He entered the ministry in 1949. Currently, Brother Melchor is the assistant district minister of the ecclesiastical district of Pampanga West. He always highlights to the brethren the importance of being submissive to the Church Administration. (*Mark Andro Milan*)

Brother Moises Esmundo (Ordained on July 14, 1964)

"I firmly believe and trust that I am able to carry out my divine duty not because of my own skills but through the help and guidance of the Lord God," Brother Moises said. He was born on June 3, 1940. Currently, he is assigned as district minister of Davao Oriental. Brother Moises Esmundo always shares to the evangelical workers and ministers in the district that they should possess full confidence in what God and Christ can do in their lives and completely obey all instructions and teachings of the Church through its Administration. (*Jeffy Igarta*)

Brother Restituto Balajan (Ordained on July 14, 1964)

Brother Restituto Balajan was born on May 28, 1929 in the province of Negros Oriental. "We are taught how important our duties are. If we turn back from our duties, we will not receive salvation on Judgment Day. I always pray because through the help of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, I am able to carry on with this divine obligation," he said. Brother Restituto is now 85 years old, and an assistant resident minister of the Sta. Catalina Local Congregation, in Negros Oriental. (*Felgem Edward Elevado*)

Brother Rizalino Santos (Ordained on July 14, 1964)

Born on April 10, 1939, Brother Rizalino Santos was raised during the Second World War. As he grew up during these trying times, he held the desire to help the Church by becoming a minister. At the age of 20, he entered the holy ministry. "We are taught by our leaders to stick to the words of God—we should not preach His words with our own perception; love the Church and do everything out of love; and work with initiative and not because we are told to do so," Brother Rizalino shared. Currently, he is the resident minister of the local congregation of Redwood City, ecclesiastical district of Northern California. (*Benjamin Joseph Marges*)

Brother Tirso Correa (Ordained on July 14, 1964)

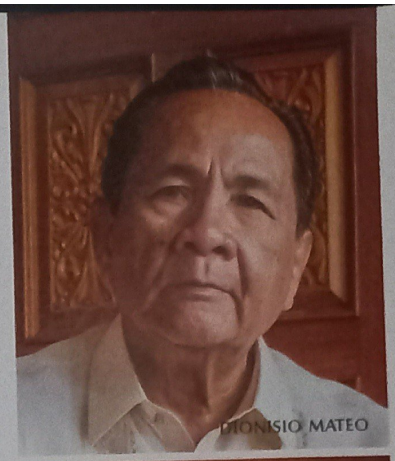
Brother Tirso Correa entered the ministry on July 20, 1956. For his 50 uninterrupted years of service as an ordained minister, Brother Tirso thanks God for upholding him in the ministry. At present, Brother Tirso is a ministerial instructor in the College of Evangelical Ministry. "Praying fervently, submitting to the Church Administration, and being ever loyal to God are keys to win His fellowship," Brother Tirso said. He was born on September 24, 1935, in Angat, Bulacan. "A true minister is ready to sacrifice, even his own life if necessary," he added. (*John Michael Hizon*)

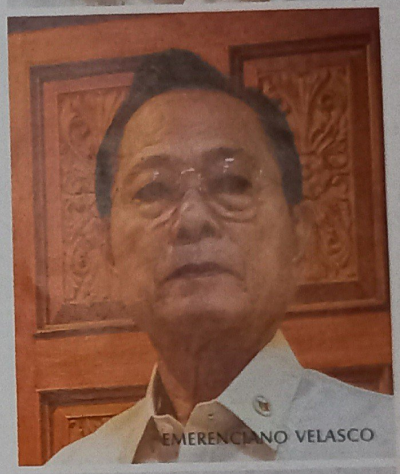
Brother Eddie San Gabriel (Ordained on May 10, 1961)

When Brother Eddie San Gabriel was ready to enter the ministry, he was determined to brave all the hardships it may bring forth. He promised not to draw back, for he knows that it would not please God. Although he experienced

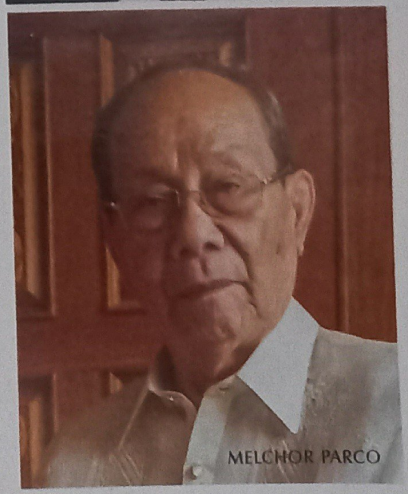
Lifetime commitment to God

The *Gawad Bituin* recipients


DIONISIO MATEO


EMERENCIANO VELASCO

MAMERTO GABRIEL


MELCHOR PARCO

IN THE BOOK of Daniel 12:3, God says, "those who have taught many people to do what is right will shine like stars forever" (*Today's English Version*). God's instruments for this endeavor are the ministers of the gospel. During the celebration of the Church Centennial on July 27, 2014 in Ciudad de Victoria, the Church Administration recognized the twelve ordained ministers who, for more than fifty years now, are still active in fulfilling their duties in the holy ministry. They were given the "*Gawad Bituin*."

Brother Dionisio Mateo (Ordained on July 14, 1964)

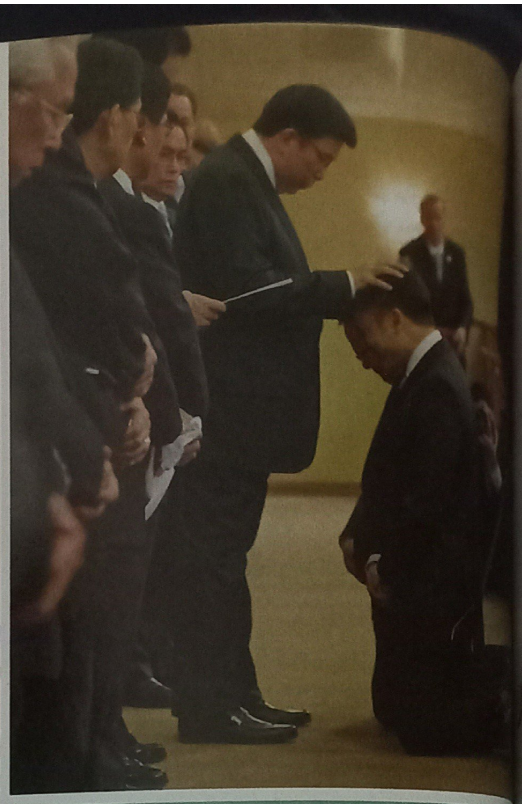
Brother Dionisio was born on August 21, 1937. In 1955, he decided to dedicate his life to the ministry. "Ministry is a lifelong commitment to God. It is a divine obligation that must be taken care of," Brother Dionisio said. Currently, at the age of 77, he is teaching and molding would-be ministers at the College of Evangelical Ministry. "A minister should be faithful and obedient to the teachings of the Bible. He should also abide by the rules and regulations implemented by the Church Administration." (*Venz Edmon Demata*)

Brother Emerenciano Velasco (Ordained on July 14, 1964)

With everything Brother Emerenciano Velasco has learned in his more than 50 years in the ministry, he shares, "We must always prepare ourselves for all the trials and tests that we may come across. Never will the Lord God forsake us as long as we keep our faith in Him and diligently obey His words." He was born on January 23, 1935 at Sto. Cristo, San Antonio, Nueva Ecija. Currently, he is the assistant resident minister of Rizal, Santiago, Isabela South. (*Daniel Deocareza Jr.*)

Brother Mamerto Gabriel (Ordained on July 14, 1964)

Brother Mamerto Gabriel's inspiration in fulfilling his duty are the lectures and advices of the three consecutive Executive Ministers of the Church. "They often remind us that the ministry is a lifetime duty. Through zealously fulfilling them, a minister ensures not only his salvation but also the salvation of brethren under his care." He was born on June 8, 1935. He heeded the call of God to enter the holy ministry at the age of 20. Currently, he is the district minister of the ecclesiastical district of Cagayan South. (*Junie Alarin*)



Ordination of ministers led by Executive Minister Brother Eduardo V. Manalo at Templo Central, Quezon City, Philippines; Battersea, London, UK (below); and Humble, Texas, USA (right)

A minister learns by heart the spirit of sacrifice. And he has already set his sights on something far more valuable than any material thing in this world.

his Maker promised him. And so, like the apostles, he understands that his sufferings are temporary; thus, he works for what are not seen—salvation and everlasting life—which are eternal (II Cor. 4:17-18). His goal may be gleaned from Apostle Paul's conviction:

"Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." (II Tim. 2:10, *New King James Version*)

To others, it may seem paradoxical that those who are given a divine obligation are to be encumbered with seemingly insurmountable challenges. But a minister learns by heart the spirit of sacrifice. And he has already set his sights on something far more valuable than any material thing in this world.

As Christ's ambassadors and peacemakers, ministers are tasked to carry out God's bidding to reconcile man with Him. They are entrusted with the ministry and message of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18-20). Hence, as people search for their purpose in life, God presents to them, through His mouthpieces—preachers of His truth—what will give them worth and meaning, that is, peace with Him. All people then must see and realize that they have to change their mind that embraces selfishness and will only lead them to destruction. In order to achieve the sense of true fulfillment, they should conform to God's words upheld and taught by His ministers in His true nation.

And with this mandate from the Almighty, ministers in the Church Of Christ live up to the task. So much time may have passed since Christ established His Church and trained His first disciples. In these present times, life's pace has quickened. Technology continuously modernizes modes of transportation and communication. Societies have altered cultures and lifestyles. However, ideals and values of watchmen expressed by God's words to serve as their guide in overseeing His people remain unchanged even from the time of the prophets. This pronouncement can sum up their passion:

"For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch." (Isa. 62:1, *NIV*)

God's watchmen in His nation
The ministers in the Church Of Christ

By JOEL A. MANINGDING and MANDY A. NEPOMUCENO

MANY PEOPLE HAVE DEDICATED their lives to the pursuit of what will make them happy, or the fulfillment of their *raison d'etre*. Although this may prove to be complicated and difficult—for most people are unsure of what will make them really happy—they go for it anyway, giving everything they have, exerting every effort they can muster. However, in the end, a lot fail to fulfill what they have been searching and worse, others, because of despair, go out of control.

But there are people who, upon putting themselves up to a task and committing every inch of their being, are certain of what will give their life meaning. So certain are they that they are willing to put aside their own interest in order to fulfill their duty. This is how ministers in the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* see their obligation. And this idea and spirit come from the Bible. When our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles led the Church, they left an example for every minister of God as they perform their varied spiritual functions.

In brief, a minister's primal functions are to propagate the faith, to officiate at the worship services and supervise various Church activities, and to administer the brethren entrusted in his care. Since he is the Lord's fellow worker (I Cor. 3:9), with the fulfillment of his duties comes the fulfillment of his being.

A minister is a leader and a servant rolled into one. He is saddled with the task of carrying on the redemptive mission of Christ by preaching the words of the Lord and by teaching God's people to follow His commands (Matt. 28:20). But his right and commission did not come from himself nor a vote from the majority, but a calling from God (Heb. 5:4). Since his office is unlike the power held by the people of this world, its emphasis leans toward something else—not on prestige, but on service.

A minister's office then is not to be seized for personal gain. His labors and efforts are not intended for his own personal glory. And so, in performing his sacred obligations, he is instructed to use his authority not through domination but based on love and cooperation (I Pet. 5:2-3, *New International Version*). Rather than emphasizing his own prerogatives, he submits to the authority of the Administration God has placed in the Church (Col. 1:25).

A minister's loyalty is to God, since he is raised to do according to what is in God's heart and mind (I Sam. 2:35). However, he is not immune to the vicissitudes of daily life. He faces trials and problems too, for he is as human as the brethren he cares for. But since he realizes that he is to be held accountable to God and not to any man, despite any obstacle, he is moved to fulfill his sacred functions while looking straight ahead to what

Philippines and in many countries abroad. These magnificent landmarks serve as monuments of faith in various places where the Church has gained its foothold. Construction of such sacred edifices and other Church facilities (like the recently-inaugurated world-class Philippine Arena and other structures in Ciudad de Victoria)—as well as the purchase of lands and properties for Church use and the renovation of worship buildings—will never cease, amid unabated poverty and hardship as the infrastructure programs of the Church go full speed ahead under Brother Eduardo's watch, for God's greater honor and glory (Isa. 24:15-16).

Indeed, the Church's glorious standing today amid a world battered with a whole gamut of crises, from internecine wars to global warming to debilitating diseases, can be attributed to the faithfulness of God's promise to help and guide the Church Of Christ and its dynamic leadership (Isa. 41:9-13).

Concerns, challenges, and the Church Administration

The global scope of the Church—with its attendant needs and wide-ranging concerns such as propagation of the faith, edification of its members, selection and training of Church officers, construction of worship buildings and Church offices, among many others—poses a great challenge to the Church leadership. Without a doubt, administering a global Church is an enormous task; it is no ordinary undertaking.

Rising up to the challenge, the Executive Minister, does not cease laboring for our sake, but responds vigorously—always trusting in God, because what is always in his heart and mind is the welfare of the Church. In fact, love for the Church is what motivates him to share even his life for us, as what Apostle Paul, one of the Church Administrators then, said:

"Because of our love for you we were ready to share with you not only the Good News from God but even our own lives. You were so dear to us!" (I Thess. 2:8, *Today's English Version*)

In addition, God bestowed on the Church Administration the authority to fill up or preach God's commandments: "I have become its minister, according to God's administration that was given to me for you, to make God's message fully known" (Col. 1:25, *Holman Christian Standard Bible*).

Thus, the Church Administration, through the help of ministers and evangelical workers, thoroughly teach and counsel the members in order to present each one perfect before the Lord Jesus on His Second Advent (Col. 1:28-29). Standing firm and holding fast or obeying those truths preached to us will make us stronger in the faith (I Cor. 15:1-2). Needless to say, to avail ourselves of God's boundless blessings, we need to maintain our fellowship with the Church Administration (I John 1:3).

Dynamic leadership

The Church, indeed, has continued to triumph in its multifarious endeavors, with the present Executive Minister making important decisions and working passionately for the Church's benefit and future.

From time to time, he reaches out to the entire Church membership through pastoral letters and biblical lessons or homilies he painstakingly prepares which are taught in the worship services, leaving no stone unturned in nurturing the faith of God's people with His words and guiding them toward spiritual maturity. And by utilizing high-tech information communication technology such as videoconferencing, he reminds Church ministers, officers, and workers of the need to be more devoted to their divine duties.

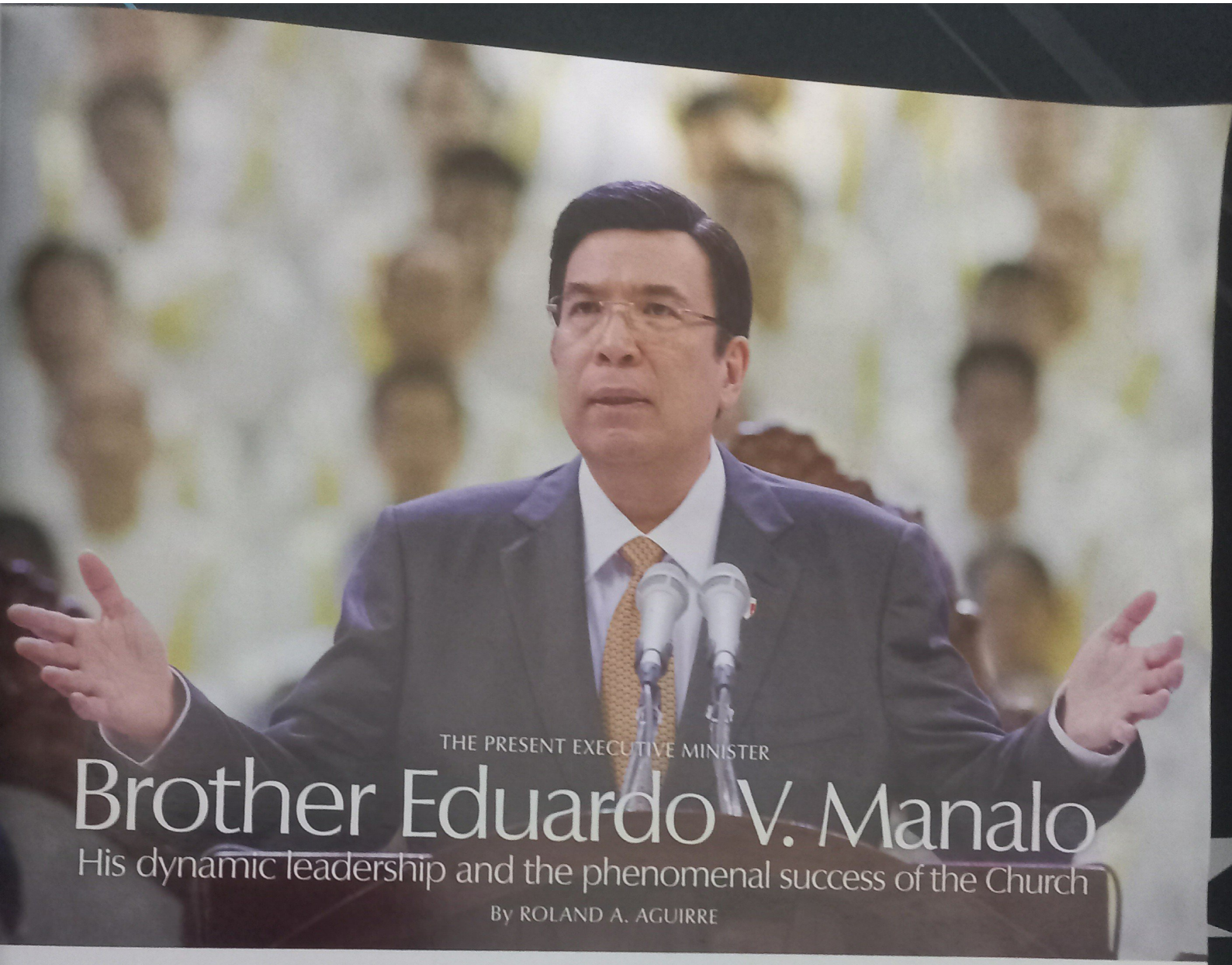
Moreover, in overseeing a global Church up close and personal, Brother Eduardo Manalo embarks on pastoral visitations across the globe, indefatigably reaching out to brethren from all walks of life. Add to this the weekly *Balikbayan Day* held every Tuesday at the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* Central Office's *Bulwagan* (Function Hall) wherein he meets visiting brethren both from the Philippine archipelago and abroad to hear their concerns and reminds them to continue on with their dedicated service to God.

Such is the solicitous concern of the Church Administration for the spiritual welfare of the brethren around the world that all means possible are being done to ensure that they remain zealous and steadfast in their faith and trust in God.

Esteeming highly the Church Administration

As members of the Church Of Christ who are under the care of the Church Administration, we must adhere to the teachings of the Bible to recognize those who labor for us (I Thess. 5:12) and to "esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake" (I Thess. 5:13, *New King James Version*). Thus, we accord the Church Administration the proper respect and love because of the work that they have been entrusted to do (I Thess. 5:12-13). It is also our Christian duty to obey and submit to them because they watch over our souls (Heb. 13:17).

Undoubtedly, Brother Eduardo—now only in his first five years of office—upon taking the mantle of overall Church Administrator, continues to lead God's nation to a new period of sustained success, stability, and triumphs; and more importantly, he oversees the Church to achieve its ultimate victory—our salvation come the nearing Judgment Day.



THE PRESENT EXECUTIVE MINISTER

Brother Eduardo V. Manalo

His dynamic leadership and the phenomenal success of the Church

By ROLAND A. AGUIRRE

THE *IGLESIA NI CRISTO* (Church Of Christ), being a religious organization, has its leader or administrator. But unlike those who appoint leaders of this world—presidents, prime ministers, CEOs, chairpersons, among others who are appointed by people and thus are accountable and subject to them—God is the one who appointed the Church Administration (I Cor. 12:28; Col. 1:25).

Moreover, as Church membership continues to increase rapidly, the ever-expanding Church concerns and endeavors must be met. To this urgent need, the important role of the Church Administration, led by its present Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, has come to the fore.

The *Iglesia Ni Cristo*'s phenomenal success

As the Church Of Christ marked its 100 years of existence in the Philippines on July 27, 2014, it is now so vast that its membership has a solid presence in all six habitable continents of the world. Millions of members belonging to 123 nationalities are now scattered in more than 5,000 local congregations in about 100 countries and territories. This results in more ecclesiastical districts, with their district offices, being established all over the world.

The Church has, no doubt, gone a long way, spanning the globe, far beyond the expectations of its detractors and unhindered by economic crisis and various upheavals in the world today. Truly, the wondrous works of God (Ps. 66:5) have been fulfilled to the entire Church when we consider its humble beginnings and then witness its unparalleled successes in all of its endeavors, one of which is the large-scale Outreach-Evangelical Missions held in towns and cities across the globe. Attesting, also, to the Church's parade of accomplishments and achievements are thousands of its worship buildings rising in the

Brother Eraño G. Manalo

1925-2009

BROTHER ERAÑO G. MANALO was born on the 2nd of January 1925 in San Juan, Metro Manila, Philippines. He was the fifth among the six children of Brother Felix Y. Manalo and Sister Honorata de Guzman.

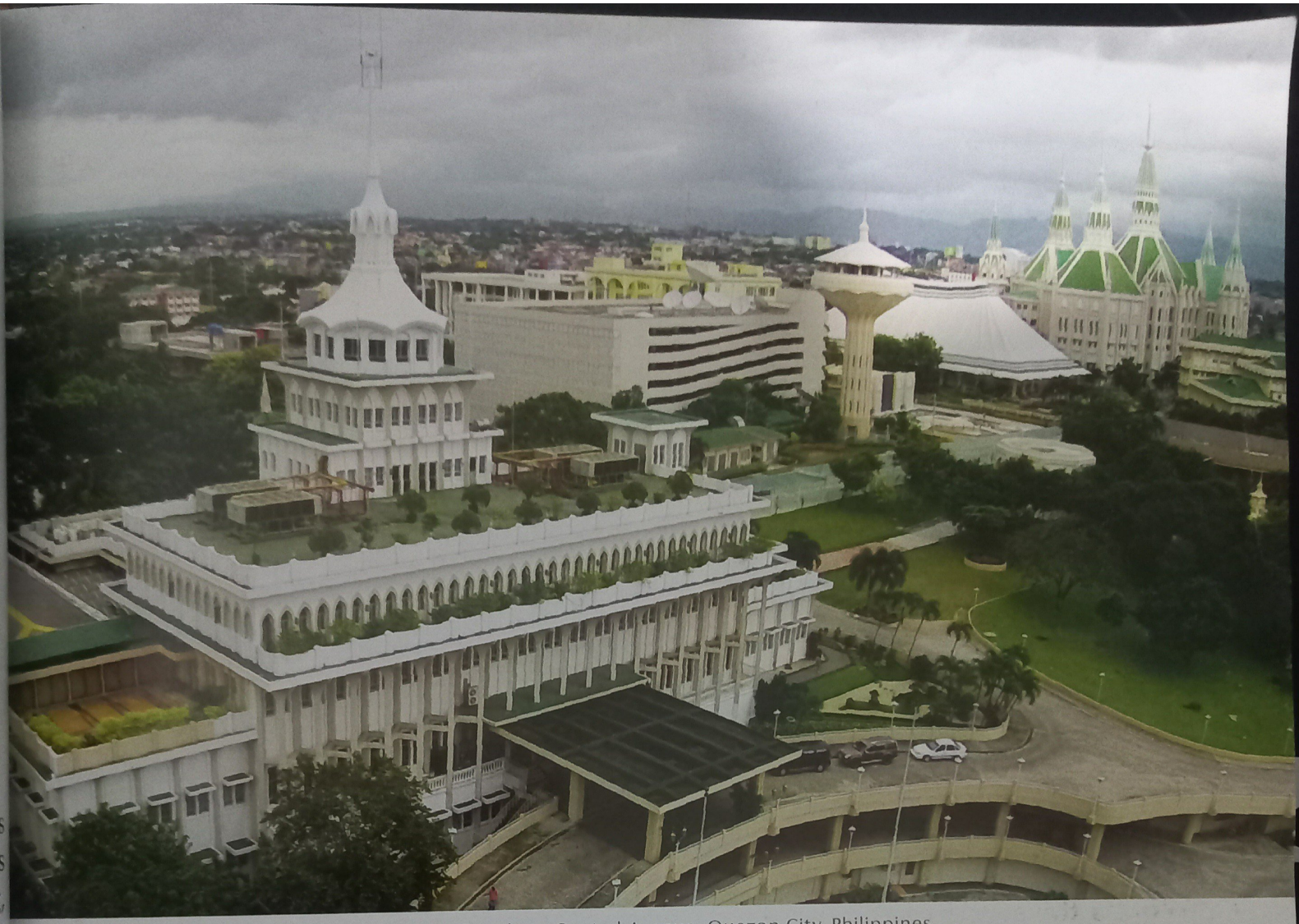
Brother Eraño was ordained a minister of the Gospel on May 10, 1947. From being a resident minister of a local congregation, Brother Eraño was appointed as the treasurer of the ecclesiastical district of Manila, and later on General Treasurer of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Eleven days after Brother Felix Y. Manalo passed away, Brother Eraño officially assumed the office of Executive Minister, on the 23rd of April 1963.

Often, Brother Eraño Manalo has been cited for his dynamic leadership. Barely five years of his accession to office, the foreign congregations of the Church were established in Honolulu, Hawaii, and San Francisco, California, USA in 1968. In the span of 46 years of leading the Church, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* expanded to 90 countries in six continents of the world as well—a noteworthy accomplishment for an organization with humble beginnings in the Philippines.

Under Brother Eraño Manalo's administration, thousands of *Iglesia Ni Cristo* houses of worship were constructed and became distinctive landmarks in the Philippine landscape. The Church also established a ministerial college, a university with several branches, a general hospital, media stations, housing projects, and resettlement communities.

Brother Eraño encouraged members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* not only to strive for spiritual maturity but also to become law-abiding members of society and live in accordance with the biblical teachings. What was once a small group of believers grew to millions recognized for their adherence to peace, discipline, and good morals here in the Philippines and abroad. Many members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* have been excelling in their chosen fields and contributing their service to the community at large.

Brother Eraño Manalo dedicated his long and blessed life to carry out the divine mission of the Messenger of God in these last days, caring for the entire *Iglesia Ni Cristo* in serving the Almighty God. Even until the very last moments of his life, the brethren in the Church were in his thoughts and prayers. On the 31st of August 2009, National Heroes Day in the Philippines, Brother Eraño victoriously finished his race of faith.



The *Iglesia Ni Cristo* Central Office Complex along Central Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines.

the world, even employing modern means of communication and broadcast to edify each one of us. The Church Administration conducts pastoral visitations to personally see the brethren's condition and to attend to their spiritual needs. This they do out of their love for us because we have become so dear to them (I Thess. 2:8, *Ibid.*).

With our salvation at heart, the Church Administration, then and now, admonish all of us to "fight the good fight for the faith" (I Tim. 6:12, *HCSB*) and "run straight toward the goal in order to win the prize, which is God's call through Christ Jesus to the life above" (Phil. 3:14, *Today's English Version*). They always exhort us to renew our life and "be innocent and pure as God's perfect children, who live in a world of corrupt and sinful people" so they, too, can declare, as did the Apostle Paul, "I shall have reason to be proud of you on the day of Christ, because it will show that all my effort and work, have not been wasted" (Phil. 2:15-16, *Ibid.*). As they encourage us to share our faith and the message of salvation to others by being "rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share," (I Tim. 6:18, *NKJV*), in the same breath, they always remind us "to make your calling and election sure" so we "will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:10-11, *New International Version*).

Although the past and present Executive Ministers never will claim any credit, honor and praise for all the Church's achievements, there's no gain saying that they are the Almighty's instruments in leading and bringing the Church Of Christ to what it is today—radiant and shining brightly as it marches on beyond its centenary, waiting for the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For Brother Felix Y. Manalo and Brother Eraño G. Manalo who were already laid to rest, we follow the biblical instruction to "remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith" (Heb. 13:7, *Ibid.*). And while not forgetting their labors of love and legacy, we vow to submit to and obey the present Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, in keeping with the biblical mandate to "obey your leaders and submit to their authority" and to always pray for them (Heb. 13:17-18, *Ibid.*) for the benefit and welfare of God's nation in these last days.

The Church Administration

By RUBEN D. AROMIN

RIDING HIGH ON the crest of its phenomenal success in all fields of its endeavor, the Church Of Christ in these last days gloriously reached its centennial year leaving observers of the religious seascape wondering, "What's the secret of the Church's success?" The answer is: our Lord God has fulfilled His promised blessings, help, and guidance to His last commissioning and last work for man's salvation.

The Church Of Christ is undeniably the work of God and not man, although the Lord Himself didn't come down to literally bring this Church to its present glorious state. Bible history attests that, from the time of the patriarchs, the prophets, and up to the last of the three great dispensations of time, the Christian era, the Lord God Almighty has used instruments in carrying out His plan and purpose. They were the men whom He appointed to either start the work of setting apart His chosen people or to continue leading them in serving Him. This was true in the ancient past and it is still true in these last days, the period of history to which the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* belongs. In this Church, the Lord God has placed an Administration, with the Executive Minister at the helm, as His instrument in bringing His nation not only to great heights of success, but most importantly to the holy city, the final abode of God's faithful servants.

The Church Administration is thus very unlike any administration of any organization here on earth, for this is "according to God's administration … to make God's message fully known" (Col. 1:25, *Holman Christian Standard Bible*). So the man whom God has appointed to serve as Executive Minister of the Church received his authority from the Almighty. This has been the hallmark of the stewardship of all those who have administered the Church, from God's messenger in these last days, Brother Felix Y. Manalo, who served as the first Executive Minister, to the Administration of Brother Eraño G. Manalo, and now the Administration of the present Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo. Each of them valiantly taught or teaches the words of God in preaching, in the worship service lessons outlined and prepared, and even in the pastoral letters read and conveyed to the Church. And they all have a singular purpose—to bring the Church, the body of our Lord Jesus Christ to its radiance, worthy of attaining the promised salvation.

God placed the Administration in the Church, not for our destruction but for our edification (II Cor. 10:8, *New King James Version*), that's why the present Executive Minister, as did his predecessors, labors tirelessly in reaching out, if possible, to all the brethren in different parts of

Brother Felix Y. Manalo

1886-1963

BROTHER FELIX Y. MANALO was born on the 10th of May, 1886 in Taguig, Morong (now Taguig City, Metro Manila), Philippines. In November 1913, he left his home and his hat-making shop and, with his wife Honorata, traveled to Punta, Sta. Ana, Manila where he began preaching Bible-based teachings at the workers' quarters of the Atlantic Gulf & Pacific Company. Soon after, a small group of people were baptized in the Pasig River and became the first members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, the Church Of Christ.

On July 27, 1914, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* was registered with the Philippine government which, prophetically, is concurrent with the beginning of the First World War.

Under Brother Felix as its first Executive Minister, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* continued to grow despite going through ridicule and, at times, severe persecution. Many have described its rapid growth as phenomenal, pointing to Brother Felix's stalwart adherence to the teachings of the Bible, his unflappable courage, and his untiring care for the Church's members.

In every aspect of Christian service, Brother Felix was a paragon. As a family man, every one of Brother Felix's and Sister Honorata's six children continued his legacy in serving God and the Church.

What Brother Felix taught in regards to giving the best for the Most High is manifested in the millions of members who regularly flock to the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* houses of worship all over the world. What he taught concerning the sharing of the Christian faith is evident in the millions worldwide who regularly listen to the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* Bible studies, be it in large assemblies or by means of the Church's television and radio programs. And what Brother Felix taught concerning love for all people is still fervently practiced by Church members all over the world today, as testified to by no less than the world-renowned Guinness World Records in several records made by the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* in extending medical, dental, and relief-goods—aid to those in need.

The significance of Brother Felix Y. Manalo and the religious work that he began has given good cause for every Filipino to be proud. Observers have noted that the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* is the largest religious group to come from the Philippines that has spread all over the world. It has made a permanent mark throughout the entire Philippine landscape with its distinct houses of worship and an even greater impact to the millions whose lives have changed for the better.

ears want to hear" (II Tim. 4:3, *New International Version*).

Indeed, there are preachers who tailor their message to suit what the audience wants, even if it compromises biblical truths. As such, we must beware of religious teachers who are ignorant of the gospel and seek to establish their own teaching in place of it. Apostle Peter informed us that those who distort the Scriptures as well as their followers are bound for destruction (II Pet. 3:16).

A mystery kept secret

To arrive at the true understanding of the Scriptures, one needs the instruction of the true messenger of God. The evangelist Luke provides insight on this matter: "So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, 'Go to that chariot and stay near it'. Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. 'Do you understand what you are reading?' Philip asked. 'How can I', he said, 'unless someone explains it to me?' So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him" (Acts 8:27-31, *NIV*).

Though in possession of the Scriptures, the eunuch was quick to acknowledge his need for instruction about the truths written therein. Notice that the Holy Spirit could just as easily have granted wisdom to the eunuch directly, but did not. Instead, Philip, a true preacher from God was sent to enlighten the eunuch with God's words. This further shows the grave mistake of believing in the so-called right of the individual in interpreting the Holy Scriptures without recourse to the guidance of true ministers of God.

Contrary to widespread belief, the Bible is not open to private interpretation (II Pet. 1:20). Though the gospel was put to writing, it has remained a "mystery kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16:25, *New King James Version*). Man by himself could not possibly understand the full meaning of the Bible even if he subjects it to years of study if God does not give him this understanding (II Tim. 3:7).

Thus, one should be careful as to whom he listens regarding God's words. Not everyone who claims to preach the gospel has the authority to preach it. Mere citing of biblical passages does not make a person a true preacher of the gospel. Neither do years of learning in Bible or theological schools nor a superior intellect and great skill in public speaking serve as proofs that a person is commissioned or sent by God to preach the gospel.

Through the preaching of His messenger, God expects us to receive His word and be reconciled to Him.

Exercise extreme caution

False preachers exist. Don't get fooled! Those who seek the truth need to exercise extreme caution when choosing whom they will listen to. We need to examine whether a certain preacher is leading us to God. The yardstick through which we should examine a preacher's teaching is the gospel. Apostle Paul says: "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8, *Revised Standard Version*).

Listening to a religious preacher who does or proclaims anything contrary to the true gospel is like courting disaster since the gospel of Christ is God's righteousness and His power of salvation is revealed in it (Rom. 1:16-17). Those who add or preach anything contrary to the Bible must be rejected. Instead, whom should be sought are those who have been commissioned to preach the genuine message of God and of Christ. Apostle Paul speaks of the need for such ministers: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:18-20, *NIV*).

The love of God for mankind is most evident in His desire for us to be reconciled with Him. All of us have sinned (Rom. 5:12) which is why we were separated and became His enemies (Isa. 59:2; Col. 1:21). But, since God does not want us to remain in such a deplorable state, He sends His messengers to lead us back to Him. Through the preaching of His messengers, God expects us to receive His word and be reconciled to Him. In the words of Apostle Paul, the messengers of God are to work as ambassadors for Christ to administer the reconciliation between man and God. So, unless men listen to the messenger genuinely commissioned by God, then they have let themselves be fooled. Don't be counted among them.

Don't let yourselves be fooled

The need for the true messenger

By SIEGFRED T. GOLLAYAN

HAVE YOU EVER experienced being fooled? Or faked? Isn't it very maddening and don't we feel bad that we fell for a trick? Sham, counterfeit, or bogus are but some of the tags given to false things taken to be genuine. Who will want fake money or medicine, or even forged documents? No one will want to have anything to do with someone pretending to be a cop, doctor, lawyer, hence, to an impostor. What most want is true and genuine—a loyal friend, a credible witness, true love, accurate news, and authentic service, to name a few.

Indeed, being extra careful is one of the wisest things that one should do. True enough, a sick person doesn't want just any doctor to treat him after hearing the diagnosis—many will seek a second opinion from a specialist. Most will look for the best lawyer they can afford before going to court.

However, there are many who, because of wanting to be "in" or be "it", will opt for imitations—be it jeans, dress, bag, perfume, electronic gadgets, watches, or jewelry, and other equipment because they can get them for a much cheaper price. But they are also low in quality, and aside from being easily broken they cannot give the same reward as those of the original. Yet, these are just material things, and if ever, can be easily replaced.

The problem is that many also use the same principle when it comes to religion. They do not care whether the worship they are rendering is true or not. They join the popular or just go with the flow. This idea is truly dangerous because at stake is not merely a thing that can easily be replaced, but the very soul of man.

Be vigilant

Apparently, people still show interest in religion. With society becoming increasingly permissive and materialistic, there are those who yearn for a return to a more spirit-filled lifestyle. Hence, as more and more seek knowledge of the pristine teachings of God, there is a need for increased vigilance to guard against those who would take advantage of this desire for spiritual guidance. Apostle John warns: "Dearly loved friends, don't always believe everything you hear just because someone says it is a message from God: test it first to see if it really is. For there are many false teachers around" (I John 4:1, *Living Bible*).

Having said that "there are many false teachers around," it can be deduced from the apostle's statement that there are two kinds of preachers: the true and the false. In our times, we witness the burgeoning of preachers and evangelists professing that they are of God. As many of them use the Bible in their preaching, people think that these preachers and their religious groups belong to God. Add to this the attitude of those who prefer to ride on the politically correct bandwagon, arguing that people should be allowed to interpret the Bible any way they see fit. However, we should not think this way. Apostle Paul forewarned: "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching

district minister. Presently, the Pacific Northwest district consists of 17 local congregations and five groups worship service in the states of Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Idaho, and Montana.

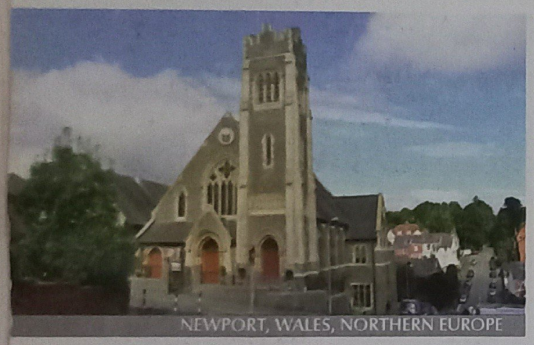
9. Southeastern Seaboard

When the ecclesiastical district of Southeastern Seaboard was created in May 1996, Brother Manuel Andaya was assigned as its first district minister. Eight local congregations and a couple of extensions and prayer committees constituted the district in its early years. Soon, though, it grew and spread to the states of Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, extending even to the Caribbean countries and territories of Aruba, Netherlands Antilles, Cuba, and Jamaica. Today, the Southeastern Seaboard Ecclesiastical District also oversees congregations and missions in the states of Louisiana and Tennessee, and in the Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Turks and Caicos, Chile, Grand Cayman Island, Panama, Anguilla Island, and Brazil.

MIAMI, FLORIDA, SOUTHEASTERN SEABOARD

10. Northern Europe

On May 31, 2000, the Northern Europe Ecclesiastical District was established, putting all the congregations in the countries in the north side of the continent under an ecclesiastical jurisdiction separate from those in the south. The district office was then set at Karben, Germany with Brother Ulysses Jucutan acting as the first district minister. On July 9, 2012, the congregations in the United Kingdom were formed into a new district. Thus, at present, the Northern Europe district is composed of 46 local congregations, extensions, and groups worship service in Germany, France, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Netherlands, Finland, Switzerland, Monaco, Russia, Lebanon, and Czechoslovakia.



NEWPORT, WALES, NORTHERN EUROPE

11. Southern Midwest

The birth of the Southern Midwest Ecclesiastical District in October 2000 indicated the Church Of Christ's increasing membership within and beyond the southwest, Midwest, and mountain regions of the USA. Today, the Church's growing presence therein is being felt even more strongly, as the district now comprises 32 congregations and sub-congregations in the states of Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. The district office which used to be housed within the Dallas worship building was transferred to a bigger edifice in Houston. Inaugurated on December 28, 2011 by the Executive Minister himself, Brother Eduardo Manalo, the building stands on a 13.3-acre lot where the new Houston worship building is also located.

HOUSTON, TEXAS, SOUTHERN MIDWEST

12. Eastern and Western Canada

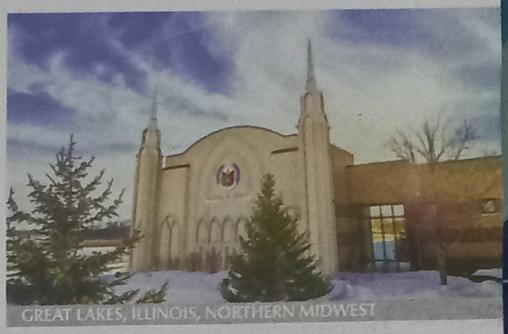
Completing this list of 12 are not one but two ecclesiastical districts—Eastern Canada and Western Canada. Both established on June 16, 2010, these two also share the honor of being the first ecclesiastical districts outside the Philippines established under the administration of the present Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo Manalo. The Eastern Canada District, with office at Scarborough City, currently supervises 15 local congregations and five groups worship service in the Canadian provinces of Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick. The Western Canada Ecclesiastical District oversees 41 congregations and groups worship service in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

TORONTO, EASTERN CANADA

included under its jurisdiction congregations, islands, and territories across the Pacific such as Guam, Micronesia, Palau, and Saipan. From Honolulu where the District Office has been stationed from the time of the first district minister, Brother David Abad, the number of congregations, worship service groups, and extensions has increased to a present total of 28, covering all four major island groups of Hawaii and six territories in the Pacific.

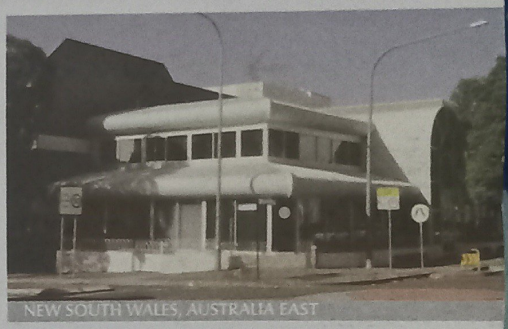
5. Northern Midwest

In June 1991, the Church Administration established the ecclesiastical district of Midwest and designated Brother Manuel Andaya as its first district minister. The district's initial line-up was composed of 11 congregations throughout America's heartland and mid-southern Canada. About a decade later, a reorganization of the district was undertaken, which resulted in its re-labeling to Northern Midwest Ecclesiastical District so as to distinguish it from its offspring, the Southern Midwest Ecclesiastical District. Presently, the Northern Midwest Ecclesiastical District is made up of 17 local congregations, nine groups worship service, and two extensions that span a dozen states in mainland USA. Its district office is situated in Parkridge, Illinois.


GREAT LAKES, ILLINOIS, NORTHERN MIDWEST

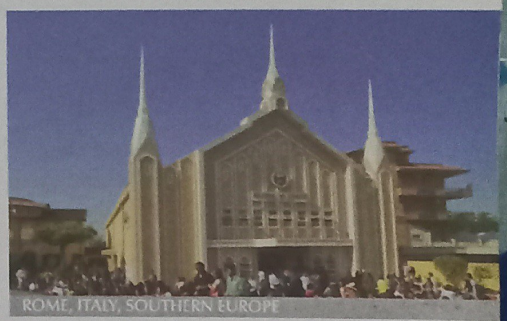
6. Australia East

The ecclesiastical district of Australia was created on May 7, 1994 to oversee the brethren not only within the Land Down Under but also in the neighboring countries of New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. In May 1996, its district office was inaugurated—an imposing building along Ross Street in Parramatta, New South Wales. Two decades now since its establishment, the district recently underwent a metamorphosis. Upon the decision of the Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, the district is now called Australia East, while the new one is known as Australia West.


NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA EAST

7. Southern Europe

The official announcement of the establishment of the ecclesiastical district of Europe was made by Brother Eraño Manalo during his pastoral visitation to Rome, Italy on July 27, 1994. He also swore in Brother Rizalino Santos as its first district minister to supervise the then 39 congregations spread in 14 countries including Israel. On May 31, 2000, the district which maintains an office building in Rome was transformed into Southern Europe, following the creation of the Northern Europe district. Southern Europe Ecclesiastical District today covers 55 congregations and sub-congregations in Italy, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey, and Portugal, including those in Israel, South Africa, Angola, Zambia, Lesotho, Mauritius, and Madagascar.


ROME, ITALY, SOUTHERN EUROPE

8. Pacific Northwest

The Pacific Northwest Ecclesiastical District traces its roots to the Seattle prayer group which became a full-fledged local congregation on April 24, 1972, the same date when the Church Of Christ was officially registered with the Washington State Authority. From this congregation came a number of other congregations and extensions in the neighboring American states across Western Canada, leading to the establishment of the ecclesiastical district of Pacific Northwest. On December 2, 1995, Brother Dominador Santos was appointed as its first

BREMERTON, WASHINGTON, PACIFIC NORTHWEST

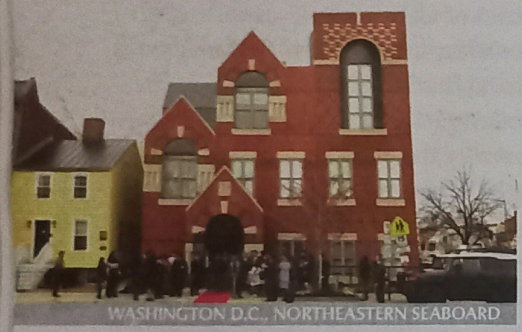
12 districts abroad that held pre-centennial celebrations

By MARLEX C. CANTOR

SACRAMENTO, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

1. Northern California

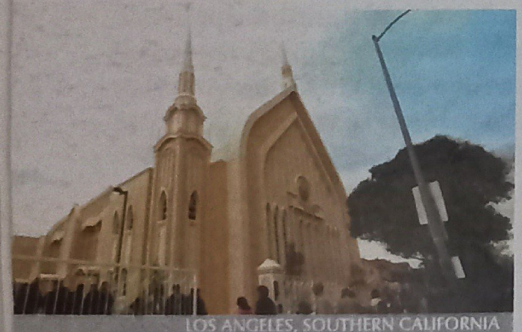
Established in February 20, 1976, the ecclesiastical district then known as District of California was first supervised by Brother Paul Membrere and initially was comprised of 17 local congregations. It was renamed Northern California in 1987 following the formation of a second ecclesiastical district in USA's most populous state. From the 16 local congregations in that year, the district now consists of 35 congregations and one group worship service—from San Francisco Bay Area where the first congregation in the US mainland emerged in 1968 to Sacramento, where the current district office stands, and all other areas northward, extending to Reno in Nevada.



WASHINGTON D.C., NORTHEASTERN SEABOARD

2. Northeastern Seaboard

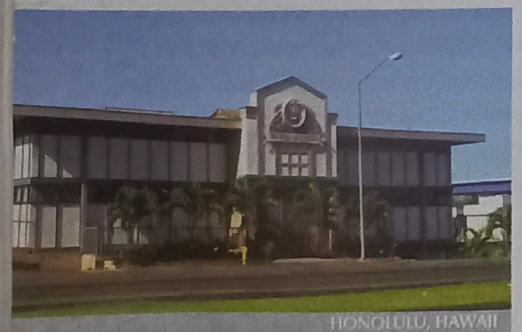
When the ecclesiastical district of Eastern Seaboard was established in 1979, it consisted of ten local congregations and six extensions spanning the East Coast, including Florida down south and the Canadian boroughs of Toronto and Montreal up north. Brother Joel del Rosario served as its first supervising minister, overseeing the district from New York. About two decades later, when the congregations in the southern part were formed into another district, the remaining congregations were reorganized into the Northeastern Seaboard district, retaining its office at Long Island City. Today, the district is comprised of 27 congregations, 11 extensions, and one group worship service scattered in 11 states, including Washington, D.C.



LOS ANGELES, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

3. Southern California

Clustered together to form a new district, twelve local congregations in and around the urban hubs of Los Angeles, Long Beach, Anaheim and San Diego initially composed the ecclesiastical district of Southern California upon its birth on January 29, 1987. First appointed to supervise the district in its infancy was Brother Edward Maranan. But the earliest mission in this part of California dates back to 1968 when Brother Eraño G. Manalo visited several brethren in Los Angeles, which led to the establishment of a prayer committee that eventually grew into the local congregation of Los Angeles on February 5, 1970. Presently on its 27th year, the district counts under its domain 45 congregations and sub-congregations not only in the southern region of California but also in neighboring states like Arizona, Nevada, and Utah as well as in countries across the US-Mexico border.



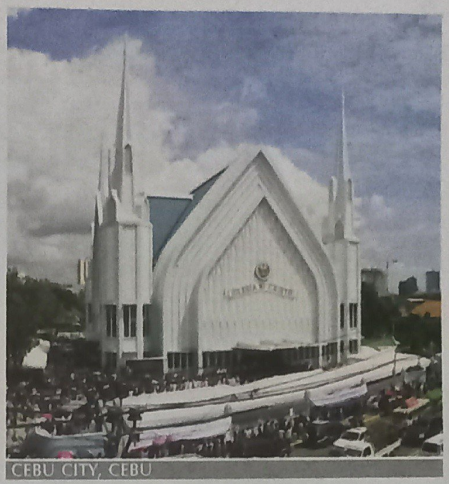
HONOLULU, HAWAII

4. Hawaii-Pacific

From that prophecy-fulfilling worship service officiated by Brother Eraño Manalo in a small house in Ewa, Honolulu, the Church Of Christ in Hawaii became a full-grown ecclesiastical district on December 30, 1988. Aside from the budding congregations in the Aloha state, the Hawaii-Pacific District also

LUCENA CITY, QUEZON

BATANGAS CITY, BATANGAS


CEBU CITY, CEBU

10. Quezon

In Quezon, which is the biggest province in southern Luzon, the Church Of Christ's mission has dramatically grown bigger since it started in the 1930s. From its establishment in 1936 with Brother Glicerio Santos Sr. as its first district minister, the ecclesiastical district of Quezon had branched out into two districts in 1967 (known then as Quezon I and Quezon II), and expanded further into four in 1989. Today, the Church has four district offices in the province—in Lucena (Quezon West), Gumaca (Quezon East), Catanauan (Quezon South) and Polilio (Quezon North). All in all, there are currently 175 local congregations and 11 extensions throughout the province.

11. Batangas

The first baptism in Batangas was held on January 18, 1936. Brother Felix Manalo himself officiated at the occasion which added 137 people to the Church. Later that year, in October, the Messenger established an ecclesiastical district in the province, appointing Brother Eugenio Cortez Sr. to lead the six initial congregations under its jurisdiction. In a span of three years, nine more local congregations were added to the district.

War came. The height of its violence was felt even by the brethren. But with God's abiding help for His people, eight more local congregations were established in the province.

Come the post-war era, further expansion was experienced by the Church. In fact, before Brother Eraño G. Manalo became the Executive Minister of the Church in April 1963, the district had already established 22 new local congregations.

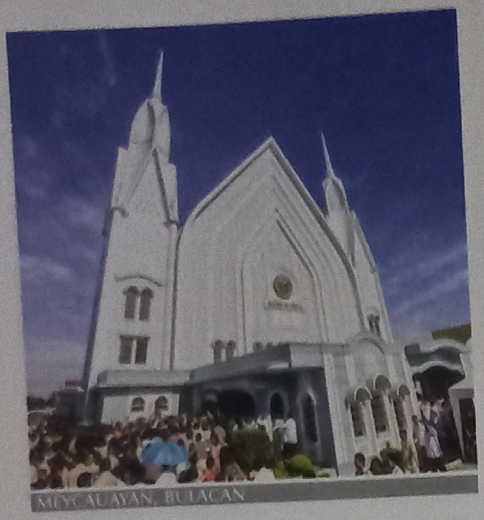
With the Church Of Christ now led by Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, the 67 local congregations making up the district of Batangas stand united with the Executive Minister in his worldwide campaign for intensified propagation of the pristine gospel and intensified edification of the brethren's faith.

12. Cebu

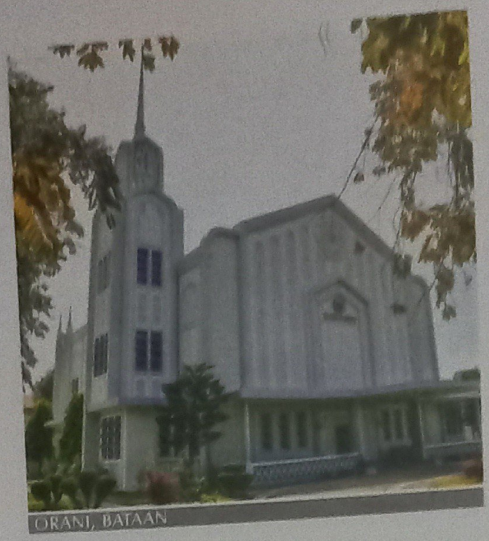
The establishment of the ecclesiastical district of Cebu in 1945 came eight years after the Church Of Christ's mission first reached this province primarily in the famous city of Cebu known as the "Queen City of the South." This marked a significant milestone in the Church's history, for it was the first district established outside Luzon, the first also in the Visayan region, and among the first ones established during the post-war era. On November 8, 1968, the largest house of worship in the province, with a seating capacity of 3,000, was dedicated to God. In this worship building, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, the present Executive Minister of the Church led the very first ordination of ministers in Cebu City on October 14, 2011.

Presently, the Church Of Christ in the Cebu Province is composed of two ecclesiastical districts (one in the north, another in the southern part) with 95 local congregations and extensions combined.

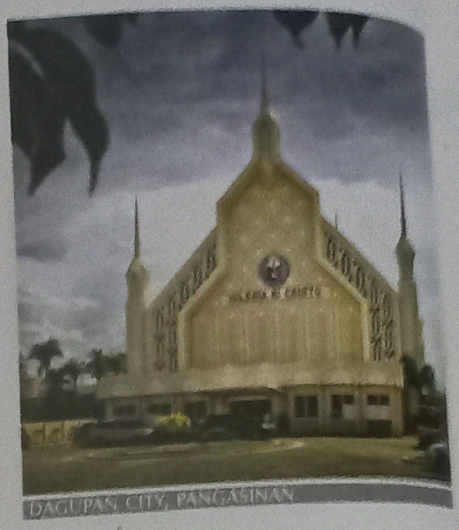
(With assistance from Kenneth Ouano, JR Emano, Melvin Manalastas, Eugene Agustin and Rvy Medicielo)



MEYCAUAYAN, BULACAN



ORANI, BATAAN



DAGUPAN CITY, PANGASINAN

7. Bulacan

The Church's mission in Bulacan began as early as 1916. After years of being under the direct supervision of the Central Office in Manila, the local congregations in Bulacan were formed into an ecclesiastical district on August 16, 1932.

The spread of the true faith in the province had been unstoppable. Brother Felix Manalo himself frequently visited Bulacan to officiate at worship services and evangelical missions in its various towns. When the *Sugo* passed away, Bulacan was among the provinces immediately visited by Brother Eraño G. Manalo, to strengthen the brethren. He also officiated at ordinations of new ministers in Bulacan in the latter years.

Under the present leadership of Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, the Church reorganized the district of Bulacan and made it into two: Bulacan North, where the six-classroom extension of the College of Evangelical Ministry in Baliuag was inaugurated in October last year, and Bulacan South, which covers, among others, the Ciudad de Victoria in Bocaue—where the gigantic Philippine Arena now stands.

8. Bataan

Ironic as it may seem, the serene province of Bataan has been etched in world history for, among other things, the infamous death march of World War II started here. But if there is a different kind of march that has been carried on in this province in Central Luzon, it is the victorious parade of the Church Of Christ's ever-growing mission to spread the Good News of salvation.

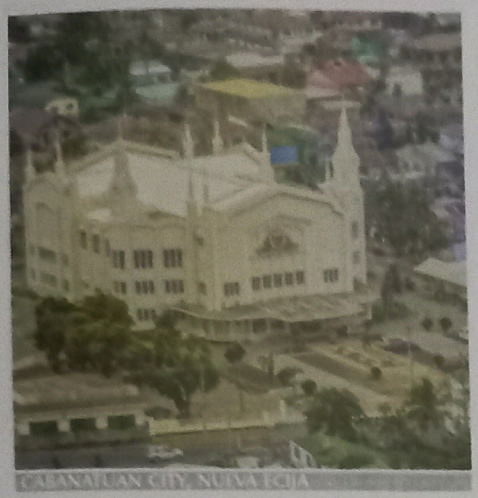
From 13 initial converts in 1929, the Church Of Christ in Bataan had grown quickly into several local congregations, which were then organized into one ecclesiastical district on September 28, 1932. Since then, the Church in Bataan has kept on treading a path of triumph.

Today, the Church Of Christ has 64 local congregations and extensions in the province, all marching on with abounding faith, hope, and love.

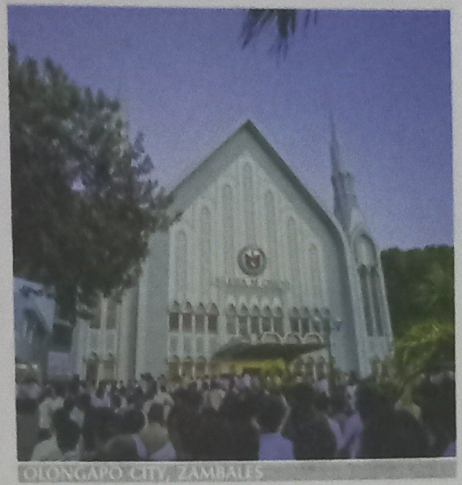
9. Pangasinan

In April 1934, God willed for His pristine doctrines to reach the province of Pangasinan. That year, Brother Felix Manalo baptized 48 people into the fold. These first members of the Church and the ministers who led them experienced severe persecutions. But the brethren braved the odds and went on to propagate the Good News of salvation. Thus, from the first worship service held in the house of Brother Policarpio Valdez in April 1934, the Church in Pangasinan had flourished into 134 congregations by 1964. In 1967, what used to be a single ecclesiastical district of Pangasinan grew into two districts: Pangasinan I (now Pangasinan Central) and Pangasinan II (now Pangasinan West), thus ensuring closer overseeing of the brethren in the entire province. Detractors were relentless in trying to hinder the growth of the Church but, with God's divine guidance, a third ecclesiastical district was born on May 3, 1971—Pangasinan East.

With three ecclesiastical districts and more than 200 houses of worship dotting the province, the Church Of Christ in Pangasinan continues to thriv



CABANATUAN CITY, NUEVA ECIJA



OLONGAPO CITY, ZAMBALES

CAVITE CITY, CAVITE

4. Nueva Ecija

Nueva Ecija's vast, fertile lands and diligent, skilled farmers account for its many bountiful rice harvests, earning for it the title "the rice granary of the Philippines." Comparably, the Church Of Christ in the province has proven to be a fecund field of spiritual harvest, not only because of the phenomenal growth of its membership but also because of the many loyal ministers and helpers of the Church Administration that it has produced—the late Brothers Teofilo Ramos Sr., Isaias Samson Sr., to name a few.

Since its first seeds were sown in Nueva Ecija in the early 1920s, God's planting has never ceased to grow and bear abundant fruit. In 1930, the first ecclesiastical district in Nueva Ecija was formed. A second one was created in 1969, followed by a third in 1990s.

At present, these three districts—Nueva Ecija South, Nueva Ecija North, and Nueva Ecija East—continue to reap abundantly in God's salvation work.

5. Zambales

Home to one of the Philippines' major seaports, Zambales has seen all—great and small—come and go. But when the Church Of Christ came to the province in May 1931, it has never left but remained steadfast against all odds.

It did not take long before the initial missionary work in Castillejos spread quickly to other towns. Not long after, in 1933, the Church Administration established an ecclesiastical district in Zambales. More than 50 years later and over 60 congregations established thereafter, the district was split into two—Zambales South and Zambales North.

Mt. Pinatubo's eruption in 1991 altered the province's landscape both geographically and economically. The withdrawal of US forces from its naval base greatly affected the livelihood of thousands of families, including Church members. But even this did not weaken the faith of the members of the Church Of Christ whose firm hope is that God has never left them.

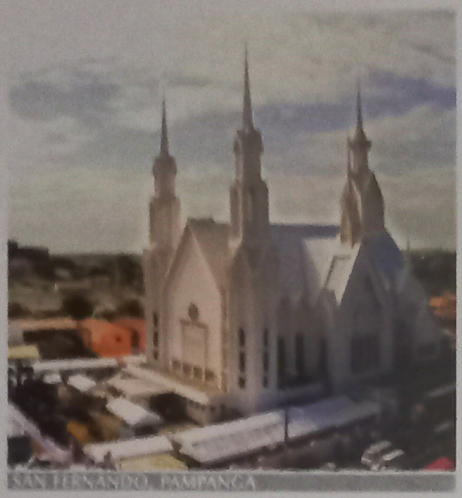
The same hope still remains ever aflame in the hearts of the faithful brethren in Zambales to this day.

6. Cavite

The 12th of June 1932 marks a significant day for the brethren in Cavite, for it is when the Church Of Christ established the ecclesiastical district in the same province where the declaration of Philippine independence was made on the exact same day 74 years earlier.

Since its early years, the district showed activeness in missionary work. In 1945, God's Messenger, Brother Felix Manalo himself preached before a large crowd in an evangelical mission held at Naic, Cavite. During Brother Eraño G. Manalo's stewardship of the Church, part of his pastoral visits to Cavite included the dedication of worship buildings, such as those in Indang (1986), and Ternate (1994). For his part, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, the current Executive Minister, has made several pastoral visits, at one of which (Cavite City, September 11, 2011), he ordained 60 new ministers.

Presently, there are now two ecclesiastical districts in the province—Cavite North, with 44 congregations and two extensions, and Cavite South, with 51 congregations and 6 extensions.


SAN FERNANDO, PAMPANGA

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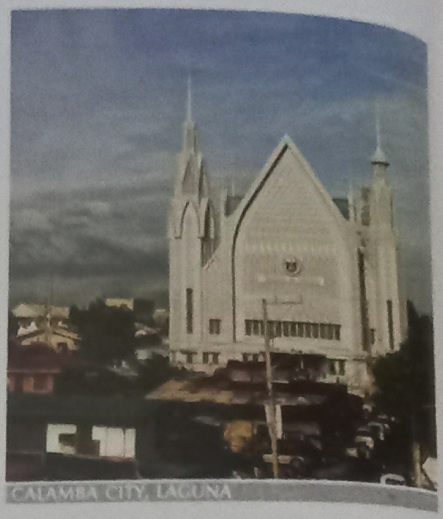
CALAMBA CITY, LAGUNA

The first 12 districts

The 12 provinces in the Philippines where Brother Felix Y. Manalo established the first 12 ecclesiastical districts of the Church Of Christ

By MARLEX C. CANTOR

1. Pampanga

The eldest among the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ecclesiastical districts was born on January 18, 1924. The 17 local congregations in the province of Pampanga were organized into one ecclesiastical district.

For over 90 years, the district has gone through the toughest trials—the religious persecution in its early years, threats from insurgent groups in the war and post-war times, to the Mt. Pinatubo eruption of the 1990s and its lingering aftermath of floods and mudflow, to name a few. But, resilient as ever, the faith of the brethren has valiantly withstood them all.

Reaching the Church's centennial year, the very first established ecclesiastical district experienced a glorious transformation. From one district with over 100 congregations in its nest, it became two— Pampanga West (with district office in New Era, San Fernando) and Pampanga East (in Arayat).

2. Tarlac

Upon its inception in 1925, the ecclesiastical district of Tarlac comprised four budding local congregations. But before World War II broke out, the number had grown to 36 congregations and by the time of Brother Felix Manalo's death on April 12, 1963, 31 more were added. During the stewardship of Brother Eraño G. Manalo, 92 new local congregations were established all over the province. In 2008, when the total number of congregations and eight extensions had reached 170, the Church Administration decided to create two districts in Tarlac to oversee them more effectively.

Today, under the leadership of the present Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo the Church continues to thrive in this melting pot of Central Luzon. Eighty-nine congregations and three extensions compose Tarlac South district, while 74 congregations and five extensions make up Tarlac North.

3. Laguna

Known for its natural springs, Laguna is home to at least seven principal water basins and about 40 rivers, including the Pagsanjan Falls, a top tourist destination. But for members of the Church Of Christ in Laguna, there is much more to the province than its beautiful crystal clear waters. Since 1928, through the preaching of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) ministers, the pristine words of God have been springing forth and finding their way into the hearts of many of Laguna's townspeople.

Like running waters, the growth of the Church in Laguna has flowed incessantly through the years. From the six pioneering local congregations (Biñan, Dela Paz, Sta. Rosa, Sinalhan, Cabuyao, and Alaminos), the once-lone district of Laguna has flourished into three ecclesiastical districts: Laguna East, Laguna South and Laguna West.

The international championship of the Bible quiz for the youth dubbed *Tagisan ng Talino* was held Friday. Significantly, it showed how the Administration as an instrument of God has taught the young members of the Church to value and keep in their hearts the biblical teachings taught to them during worship services.

The week-long celebration at Ciudad de Victoria closed with an evangelistic campaign on Saturday to share to thousands of guests some basic biblical teachings first preached by Brother Felix Manalo 100 years ago.

In all these activities, everyone just wanted to be part of the celebration, eager to contribute to its success not for personal honor but for God's. Not counting their labors and sacrifices during months of rehearsals and preparation, those involved in the production did their respective parts with diligence and enthusiasm. They expected nothing in return except that feeling of certainty of having performed well yet still mindful of taking no credit whatsoever because the moment was dedicated solely for glorifying God.

Multitude of brethen wave INC flaglets at the Philippine Arena on July 27, 2014.

Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo (right) with Philippine President Benigno S. Aquino III during the inauguration of Philippine Arena on July 21, 2014

seasoned soloists/vocalists, the INC Symphony Choir, the INC Symphony Orchestra and the New Era University Rondalla.

Another musical spectacle, "*Ang Bayan Mo'y Nagpupuri*" [Your People Give Praise] relived significant moments in the Church's history, charting its growth and expansion around the world. It featured a total of around 500 singer-actors and dancers and a 1,100-member chorale.

On July 31, the nostalgic journey back to the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*'s beginnings unfolded with the stage play "*Ang Sugo*" [The Messenger]. It portrayed the life and ministry of Brother Felix Y. Manalo whom the Church believes is God's Messenger in these last days.

Iglesia Ni Cristo Centennial Celebration: God is the reason

By LLOYD I. CASTRO

"GREAT IS THE LORD, and greatly to be praised ..." (Ps. 48:1, *New King James Version*). In this spirit thus the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* commemorated its centenary with the firm belief that the Almighty God Himself is the One who made this historic event possible.

It is in recognition and gratitude of His great works to the Church for the past century that occasioned this great celebration: "For You are great and do great things. You alone are God" (Ps. 86:10, *New Life Version*).

Hence, every activity held at the Ciudad de Victoria Complex from July 21 to August 2, 2014 and in the Countdown to the Centennial held monthly from July 2013 to May 2014 was intended solely to giving back all praise and glory to God for the successes with which He blessed the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*.

The Philippine Arena itself, the centerpiece of the INC's centennial projects and main venue of the celebration, was built above all "for the glory of God," thus declared the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo. Indeed, except for the inaugural program on July 21, 2014, the first ever activity held in the world's largest mixed-use indoor theatre was the special worship service to the Lord God on July 27, which was the highlight of the Centennial celebration.

No one among the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* members wanted to pass that chance of a lifetime in "Celebrating 100 Years of God's Blessings." Every heart was aflame with eagerness to proclaim in psalms and prayers God's love and mercy.

It was for this reason that everyone in an estimated two million faithful braved sun and rain and went without sleep just to be among the brethren in worshiping the Father on that awaited occasion. And it was for this reason that 1,100 places of worship around the world were hooked up to the Philippine Arena through videoconferencing so that those who could not make it to the Ciudad de Victoria could take part in the special worship service and receive spiritual nourishment through God's words preached by the Executive Minister.

In his homily inspired by the Holy Scriptures, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo attributed to God the present status of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* due to its sustained growth even in these times of economic difficulty. In just five years after he acceded to the office of Executive Minister up to the centennial, God willed the establishment of 19 new ecclesiastical districts, 220 local congregations and 481 extensions. More than 600 houses of worship have been consecrated to God and almost 350 are being renovated. Moreover, the Executive Minister has ordained 2,740 ministers. (Fifty-eight were added on August 8.)

Citing biblical proofs, Brother Eduardo reminded the brethren that the Church's unstoppable growth and expansion, despite facing fierce persecution and other forms of hindrances, is a proof that *it* is the true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. God only fulfilled and continues to fulfill, the Executive Minister pointed out, His promises to His Messenger and His people in these last days. The strong presence of the Holy Spirit felt during the congregational prayers reinforced this conviction among the faithful.

Thus, every heart overflowed with joyful exaltation to God while singing the anthem "*Ako'y Iglesia Ni Cristo*" [I am a member of the Church Of Christ], renewing their undivided allegiance and obedience to Him.

The spirit of giving back all the glory to God in Christ's name prevailed in all succeeding activities namely, an oratorio (which followed the special worship service), a musical, a stage play, a Bible quiz, and an evangelical mission held on July 29, 30, 31, and August 2, respectively.

The Centennial Oratorio entitled "*Ang Iglesia Ni Cristo Sa Mga Huling Araw*" [The Church Of Christ in these last days] drew inspiration from Bible verses attesting to the emergence of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* in the Philippines and its subsequent growth. It was performed by

"Do not be afraid — I am with you! From the distant east and the farthest west I will bring your people home." (*Today's English Version*)

In the penultimate chapter of the book of Isaiah, the prophet foretells the true home of God's people, the New Jerusalem, where they can rejoice forever (Isa. 65:17-24). In other words, the prophecy in Isaiah 43:5 foretells of people to whom God has promised salvation, the people whom God planned to be in the one true Church Of Christ.

In Isaiah 43:5, the Hebrew word translated as "distant east" is "*mizrach,*" according to *Smith's Bible Dictionary* (p. 154). Hence, the translation done by biblical scholar James Moffatt:

"From the far east will I bring your offspring, and from the far west I will gather you." (Isa. 43:5, *Moffatt Translation*)

The Church Of Christ that began through the preaching of Brother Felix Y. Manalo thus started in the Far East since the Philippines is "almost at the geographical center of the Far East" (*Asia and the Philippines*, p. 169). This Church also has, in its history, a significant historical connection to the Far West. According to the *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1976*, two of the states found in the geographical region known as the Far West are Hawaii and California (p. 88). From late July to early August of 1968, the first gatherings of the Church outside the Philippines took place when the second Executive Minister of the Church, Brother Eraño G. Manalo, led the worship services in Hawaii and California.

That the Church has spread now all over the world should surprise no one since the Lord Jesus Himself foretold that God's message preached by His Church would reach countries around the world:

"All during this time, the good news—the Message of the kingdom—will be preached all over the world, a witness staked out in every country. And then the end will come." (Matt. 24:14, *The Message*)

The right time: 1914

Of particular note are the Lord Jesus' words, "All during this time … And then the end will come." The mission of the Church would take place during a prophesied time when the world's end is about to come. After prophesying about the "far east" in Isaiah 43:5, the prophet Isaiah called that period of time "the ends of the earth" in verse 6.

When the disciples of our Lord Jesus asked Him when that time period would be, He spoke of destructive global events that include wars, famines, and earthquakes (Matt. 24:3, 6-8). While the Church Of Christ has been preaching for the past century that this period of time began with the onset of the First World War on July 27, 1914—the same day the Church Of Christ was registered in the Philippines—recently other biblical scholars have come to the same unavoidable conclusion:

"Jesus now tells His followers how they could discern when the world was actually entering into *the beginning of the birth pangs* ... The approach of the end of the age would see several phenomena on the earth occurring at the same time. Those phenomena, would be: 1. *Many nations rising up against many other nations* 2. *Kingdoms rising against kingdoms* 3. *Famines* 4. *Disease epidemics* 5. *Earthquakes in various places*. In Mark 13 the word *troubles* is used by our Lord instead of disease epidemics … Wars between *nations*, or even between *kingdoms*, is and has been a common occurrence. History has recorded *famines* at various times. There have been times of great *disease epidemics*. There have been *earthquakes* in the past, but increasingly so in the present day. Jesus tells His disciples, however, to be awaiting a specific time during which all of these phenomena would be in evidence at the same time. The first such time in world history occurred during the years of World War I (1914) …" (Matt. 24:6-8 footnote, *Last Days Bible*)

Significant events in the Church Of Christ's history and earth-shaking events in world history have taken place at the same time—as have times of terrible calamity and confusion and the ascendance of the Church. The reason for this is simple: the Lord God Himself wants to show through prophecy that, as the world heads towards its foretold destruction, this one Church that is the work of His hands is headed towards His promised salvation:

"Earth is polluted by its very own people, who have broken its laws, Disrupted its order, violated the sacred and eternal covenant. Therefore a curse, like a cancer, ravages the earth. Its people pay the price of their sacrilege. They dwindle away, dying out one by one … Yes, from the east GOD's glory will ascend. Every island of the sea Will broadcast GOD's fame, the fame of the God of Israel." (Isa. 24:5-6, 15, *The Message*)

References:

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Philippines, and added to the existing number of districts.

For the glory of God, Brother Eduardo continued the work of building beautiful houses of worship and other edifices for the use of the Church. He also approved and made possible the purchase of properties from other religions, then renovating existing structures therein, if not building on them anew from the ground up.

In time for the Church's centennial celebration, Brother Eduardo dedicated to God the worship building for the local congregation of Capitol in Quezon City on July 19, 2014. He also inaugurated the Philippine Arena, the world's largest indoor arena and the largest mixed-use indoor theater to date on July 21, 2014, which on July 27, 2014, became the venue of the thanksgiving worship service that the Executive Minister of the Church officiated as the Church Of Christ celebrated its 100th anniversary of its emergence in these last days. An estimated two million faithful gathered in the Philippine Arena site, the adjacent Philippine Sports Stadium, and in the tents set up for the occasion at Ciudad de Victoria, in Bulacan, combined. Everyone intently listened to the message of the Executive Minister who exhorted the faithful to steadfastly fight for the faith and march onward to the greatest celebration that shall be held in the heavenly kingdom.

The years that changed the world

By JOEL V. SAN PEDRO

IN THE 100 YEARS of the Church Of Christ's history, two particular years stand out: 1914 and 1968. The first marks its emergence in the Philippines while the latter the inception of its evangelism in other countries, with the Church's initial gatherings for worship taking place in Hawaii and California, USA.

It is not only for members of the Church Of Christ, however, that these two years are significant. A quick survey of an online book store reveals the following titles about the year 1914: "The Month that Changed the World: July 1914"; "1914: The Year the World Ended"; and "1914, A World at Crisis".

For 1968, the following can be found: "1968: The Year That Rocked the World"; "Time 1968: War Abroad, Riots at Home, Fallen Leaders and Lunar Dreams—The Year that Changed the World", and "1968: The World Transformed".

Two years stand out in the history of the Church Of Christ that stand out also in world history—two different years in one century that did indeed change the world. Is this just a coincidence? What does God want people to know when it comes to the Church Of Christ?

Planned by God

The apostles proclaimed that God has a plan "when the time is right … to bring all creation together … with Christ as head" (Eph. 1:9-10, *Good News Testament*). Apostle Paul wrote, in the same letter to the Ephesian Christians, that there is one Church that is the body of Christ and therefore has Christ as its head and Savior (Eph. 5:23, *Ibid.*). To be in this one Church is to follow God's "master plan of salvation for the Church through Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:21, *Living Bible*). This one Church that has God's blessings and His promise of salvation is known in the Bible by a particular name, the Church Of Christ:

"The common object of their labor was to bring the Christians maturity, to prepare them for Christian service and the building up of the Church of Christ." (Eph. 4:12, *Norlie's Simplified New Testament*)

The right places

However, identifying the one true Church Of Christ is not by name alone. As Apostle Paul declared, God will complete His master plan of salvation concerning the Church Of Christ "when the time is right" so that all people may know that this is His work.

The prophet Isaiah also spoke of things that God will do that all people should know are the work of His hand:

"So that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it." (Isa. 41:20, *New International Version*)

Among the things that the prophet Isaiah foretold that God would do is the prophetic declaration recorded in Isaiah 43:5:

Eduardo V. Manalo, was elected Deputy Executive Minister in a special gathering of ministers. But even before his election as Deputy Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo was tasked with overseeing the flock as Coordinator for Metro Manila. And as Deputy Executive Minister he was sent to officiate at the thanksgiving worship services in Waipahu, Hawaii and in San Jose and San Francisco, California, USA to commemorate the 30th year of the Church in the West. He was also tasked to conduct pastoral visitations in several local congregations in Europe and Asia. Hence, when Brother Eduardo succeeded his father as Executive Minister of the Church, he was truly equipped and ready for the divine task of leading God's people.

Upon taking the helm of the ministry, Brother Eduardo immediately embarked on a series of pastoral visitations not only around the country, but all over the world – a task that is certainly not for the faint-hearted. It required, more than ever, a dedication to the level where sacrifices had to be made. For one, he had to contend with differing time zones and climates as he traveled from one continent to another. Nonetheless, he went about doing his task of strengthening the faith of the brethren by officiating worship services in many parts of the world—exhorting them to contend or fight for their faith.

He also undertook the ordination of ministers not only in the Philippines but also abroad. The first ever ordination done on foreign soil was the ordination of ministers on December 28, 2011 at Humble, Texas. This ordination outside the Philippines was repeated at Battersea, England, on June 1, 2013 where Brother Eduardo sounded the call for able youth members to join the ministry which resulted in an unprecedented increase of enrollment in the College of Evangelical Ministry, the school where future ministers of the Church are trained. From January 2010 to August 2014 alone, a total of 2,798 ministers have been added to the Church's workforce, and at present over 9,000 are studying to become ministers.

When the new Executive Minister of the Church took the mantle of leadership, it was not the best of times in the world. Calamities, both man-made and natural, were happening one after another in various places. Brother Eduardo, however, took no time in mobilizing the socio-civic arms of the Church such as the Society of Communicators and Networkers (SCAN) International that he himself organized more than two decades back on February 6, 1989, as well as the *Lingap sa Mamamayan* and its counterpart abroad, Aid to Humanity. The varying needs of the less-privileged recipients moved Brother Eduardo to organize the Felix Y. Manalo Foundation, Inc. and have it registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and its counterparts in some countries abroad in 2011. Through UNLAD International, that Brother Eduardo also caused to be organized, sustainable agro-based livelihood projects were set up in identified areas starting with the launching of the Eco-Farming Project in Nueva Era Resettlement Area in Agusan del Sur on July 6, 2013.

Through the call of the Executive Minister, volunteers readily trooped to areas of operation to help alleviate the plight of calamity victims such as those of Hurricane Sandy in New York in 2012; the flash flooding experienced by the inner country towns in south-eastern Australia, the continent down under, also in 2012; the siege of Zamboanga City by some rebel that rendered thousands homeless the 7.2 magtitude earthquake tha greatly damaged Bohol and Cebu and Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan with its accompanying storm surge that rendered thousands of peopl homeless that many of them wer for many days without food i Leyte, particularly in the populou city of Tacloban in November 201 (the dead, numbering to severa thousands, were not all accounte for). On the 100th day after the Supe Typhoon happened, the Church hel a record-breaking "Worldwide Walk for those affected by it. A mont later, Brother Eduardo officiated a worship service in Tacloban Cit and proceeded to inspect the ongoin resettlement project, complete wit a livelihood component, that th Church put up in *Sitio* New Er Alang-alang, Leyte.

While the temporal needs humanity were being taken care o their spiritual welfare was likewi fostered; hence, Brother Eduard caused the establishment of *Kabaya Ko, Kapatid Ko* (My Countryme My Brethren) in 2013 which aime at sharing the teachings of th Church to a wider audience. The in February 2014, coinciding wi the Centennial Year of the Churc the Executive Minister rallied th brethren to intensify the work o propagation in a biblically inspire endeavor aptly called "Abunda Fruit Bearing". Brethren all over th world have been truly one with th Church Administration in fulfillin God's mandate of calling peop to the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Increase membership meant the establishmen of more local congregations an districts worldwide. To date, unde Brother Eduardo Manalo's leadershi 21 ecclesiastical districts have alread been created—11 abroad and 10 in th

had laid down the groundwork of practically all the internal institutions within the Church – the last organization he gave his blessings to was the association of married members which would later be called *Buklod ng Gintong Layunin* (literally, bond of golden purpose). However, as early as 1936, Brother Manalo already gave his nod to *Tambuli ng Silangan*, the organization of the youth members of the Church, which later came to be called *Kapisanang Maligayang Pagtatagumpay*, the forerunner of the *KADIWA*, acronym for *Kabataang May Diwang Wagas* and *Binhi* (Seed), presently the youth organizations in the Church which were formally founded in 1973 under the guidance of the next leader of the Church.

The second Executive Minister

A full ten years before Brother Felix Manalo was laid to rest, he started a long range plan of training a future leader, putting the latter on a rigid training program to prepare him for the arduous task ahead. Thus, on January 28, 1953, during a historic convocation of ministers, Brother Eraño G. Manalo, the fifth child of Brother Felix and Sister Honorata, was chosen or elected to lead the Church in the event of the passing away of the Messenger of God in these last days.

A year after the demise of Brother Felix Manalo, under the leadership of Brother Eraño Manalo, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* sought to tell the world that contrary to the expectation of many, the Church was very much vibrant and alive, responsive, and full of dynamism as ever during the Church's Golden Anniversary celebration on July 27, 1964 which was held at the Araneta Coliseum, then reportedly the world's largest domed stadium. Ten years later, the Church returned to the domed venue for its 60th anniversary, where in a special worship service that he officiated, Brother Eraño awarded medals of service to 60 pioneer ministers.

Meanwhile, barely five years after taking on the mantle of leadership, Brother Eraño brought the Church Of Christ to the far west when he officiated a worship service on July 27, 1968 at Ewa Beach, Honolulu, Hawaii, then at San Francisco, California in the United States' mainland the following month. Thus, God's work of salvation went beyond the far eastern shores. This was the start of the worldwide expansion of the Church. This was also the year that the Church started to use the radio as a medium in propagating the gospel. Then, in 1983, the Church started to tap the potent medium of television in bringing the Good News to the people. Brother Eraño continued the work where the Messenger in these last days left off such as the building of huge and beautiful houses of worship and other church edifices. Year 1971 saw the completion of the Central Office complex at Diliman, Quezon City which was inaugurated on May 10, 1971. On July 27, 1984, Brother Eraño dedicated to God the Central Temple in a special worship service that was attended by members—delegates from various local congregations of the Church around the world.

One of the most important milestones of Brother Eraño's leadership was the establishment of a formal school for ministers known as Evangelical College (EVCO) which opened on September 16, 1974. In 1980, EVCO secured the approval of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to offer a course granting a degree known as Bachelor of Evangelical Ministry (BEM).

Concerned about the education of the youth in the Church, Brother Eraño put up the New Era Institute, a high school institution, in 1975 that paved the way for the establishment of the non-sectarian New Era College in 1978, which on June 30, 1995 was elevated to a University status.

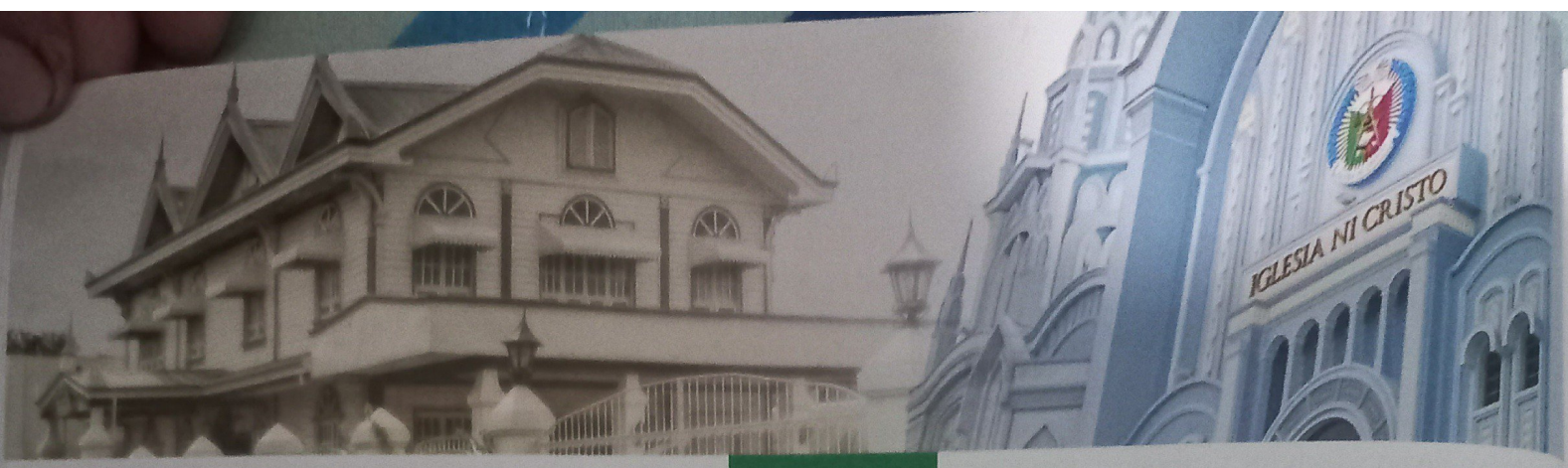
Concern for the temporal welfare of man caused the then Executive Minister to undertake social actions such as the establishment of *Barrio* Maligaya in Nueva Ecija, a resettlement project for brethren who were victims of the religious persecution at Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac in 1964, as well as conducting *Lingap sa Mamamayan* (Aid for Humanity) in 1981, a socio-civic activity that provided free medical, dental, economic and other assistance to indigents, members and non-members alike. These socio-civic endeavors were even made more responsive and service-ready with the creation of the Church's Social Services Office in 1986 and the building of New Era General Hospital which was inaugurated on April 23, 1993.

Other notable glimpses during Brother Eraño Manalo's stewardship of the Church were the official establishment of the local congregation of Rome in Italy on July 27, 1994, signifying the full restoration of the Church in Rome; the official establishment of the local congregation of Jerusalem in Israel on March 31, 1996, signifying the Church's return to its original home; and the official establishment of the local congregation of Athens in Greece on May 10, 1997, signifying the extension of the Gentile mission.

For 46 years, from 1963 to 2009, Brother Eraño ably steered the Church to more successes until he was made to rest on August 31, 2009.

The dawn of the new guardian of the faith

Fifteen years before the passing away of Brother Eraño Manalo, on May 6, 1994, his eldest son, Brother



THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO

A glimpse into the history of the Church

By NICANOR P. TIOSEN

ON JULY 27, 1914, at the outbreak of the First World War, when Austrian troops undertook their first invasion of Serbia after sending her startling ultimatum, in the Philippines, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* was registered with the Philippine government. But even before the documents of the Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Office of the Division of Archives, Patented Properties of Literature and Executive Office of Industrial Trade Works, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* had commenced the work of evangelization as Brother Felix preached the true Gospel among the workmen of Atlantic Gulf and Pacific (A.G. & P) Company in Punta, Sta. Ana, Manila. The first converts were baptized in early 1914 in the Pasig River. Afterwards, Brother Felix, with his wife Honorata and infant daughter Pilar, headed for Tipas, in the province of Rizal, to continue his preaching task.

The pioneering years

From the start of his mission, Brother Felix met intense opposition from his townsmates who were predominantly Catholic, as well as from those who had embraced the new Protestant religion that was brought in by the Americans at the turn of the 20th century. Notwithstanding, the Church marched undaunted. One after another, local congregations were established, and gradually, the Church developed a centralized structural organization whereby a cluster of local congregations comprised a "division" (today called district) roughly equal to a province which was supervised directly by Brother Felix who set up the first central office in Tondo, Manila. The first Executive Minister of the Church took upon himself all administrative and spiritual concerns such as the building of the first makeshift house of worship from easily available materials like palm fronds and woven bamboo in Gabriela, Tondo, in 1918 to the first all concrete worship building built for the local congregation of Washington, Sampaloc, Manila in 1948. He also personally took charge of the training of ministers in what was then called "*Ang Klase*" (The Class) in 1915. The first ministers and religious workers whom Brother Felix trained became the pioneer evangelists who braved persecution, ostracism, and privation in places that were the strongholds of other religions, as they ably assisted the Messenger of God in these last days in the work of propagation.

Pursuing the mission of true Christians to propagate their faith, the Church ventured into publishing the *Pasugo* (God's message). The first issue appeared in February 1939 with Brother Felix writing the first editorial outlining the four purposes of the magazine which are: first, to propagate God's words among non-believers; second, to inform the people of the world about the words of God written in the Scripture; third, to be a vehicle of news about the activities of the members of the Church; and, fourth, to participate in crystallizing the ideals of the nation which the Philippines was then struggling to be. Then the Second World War broke out.

Notwithstanding, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, through God's continued guidance of His messenger, went on unhampered.

For almost half a century, Brother Manalo effectively and efficiently administered the Church until his death on April 12, 1963. But before his well-deserved rest, Brother Manalo

"Yet it cannot be denied that the Iglesia [Ni Cristo] is a large, powerful and expanding organization. It may well constitute the most vital and aggressive threat which the Catholic Church faces in the Islands at the present time. It is most certainly a force which must be reckoned with now and in the years to come by anyone interested in the religious welfare of the Filipino people."

Joseph J. Kavanagh
The Iglesia ni Cristo

"The *Iglesia Ni Cristo* or Church of Christ astoundingly continues to grow with thousands of people converted in the church. It started as a humble religion with only few members in 1914 but looking at the INC now with its superb houses of worship, this indigenous Christian religion has emerged as a dominant church that obtained the respect of Filipinos for its role in nation building."

Quennie Ann J. Palafox
"First Executive Minister of the Iglesia Ni Cristo (Church of Christ)"
]Excerpt from **National Historical Institute (NHI)** website

"The [Iglesia Ni Cristo] has been transformed into the most dynamic and powerful indigenous belief system in the Philippines. Growing at a phenomenal rate … this upstart community of faith may have recently surpassed Islam as the nation's second largest religion. … Indeed, the INC ... may be the most successful form of 'indigenous Christianity' emanating from the Third World in this century."

Robert Reed
Editor
Pattern of Migrations in Southeast Asia

"In the context of the country's religious history, the [Iglesia Ni Cristo's] growth is phenomenal … The INC emerged in the darkening shadows of the First World War: Manalo was a solitary voice preaching … But in no time at all, His Church grew by leaps and bounds, eliciting respect and admiration from the leading lights of other faiths. Indeed, no other religious faith in the country has shown more unity, purposiveness and vitality than the INC."

Edward R. Kiunisala
"Chosen People"
Philippines Free Press,
January 9, 1993

"We have considered the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* as an outstanding example of the world-wide independent church phenomenon … On the world-wide scene its significance is great, primarily, because of its size and wealth. The *Iglesia Ni Cristo* is the largest (non-mission related) independent church in Asia."

Arthur Leonard Tuggy
Author
Iglesia Ni Cristo: A Study in Independent Church Dynamics

"It has been noticed that the Church, the Iglesia, has grown dramatically to the extent that now it can be said that it is the biggest religious denomination in the country."

Cesar Pobre, Ph.D.
Former President
Philippine Historical Association

"Being a Filipino Church, for that matter, it has gone beyond the borders of the Philippines, establishing a kind of dimension that has never been reached by any indigenous church. In fact, a lot of the international ecclesiastical organizations are really foreign-based. So, I think this is one phenomenal example of a success story as far as the Church is concerned."

Samuel Tan, Ph.D.
Former Chairman
National Historical Institute

"With its more serious and larger following, the Iglesia ni Cristo was organized in 1914 by Felix Manalo. It has since become one of the richest and most powerful groups in the country."

Alfredo Roces
Editor
Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation

"What Felix Manalo and his Iglesia have done demonstrate all over again that Christianity, when practiced in earnest, always succeeds, not only in spiritual but even in material terms."

Nick Joaquin
National Artist of the Philippines for Literature
Ronnie Poe and Other Silhouettes

God's handiwork

Why has the Church Of Christ flourished, instead of withering and vanishing into oblivion—as others have wished—some people may be wondering. The answer is crystal-clear one century after it was begun: this work, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, is the handiwork—the last work of salvation—of the one true God, the Father, Creator of heaven and earth. And He long, long ago declared:

"I work and Who can hinder it?" (Isa. 43:13, *New Revised Standard Version*)

Outside looking in

Observations on the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*

Compiled by ARNEL M. ARMENIA and GERALD L. BARCEBAL

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT that the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (INC) or Church Of Christ that emerged in the Philippines in 1914 would reach a hundred years and be poised for an even more dynamic campaign beyond? Moreover, the parade of successes the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* has achieved through the years has not gone unnoticed or unseen.

Here are some observations on the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* made by nonmembers:

"'*Remarkable growth*' ... The *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (INC) is a significant element today in the religious mosaic of the Philippines. Boasting several million members ... it has seen remarkable growth since its humble beginnings in 1914."

Anne C. Harper
"The Iglesia Ni Cristo and Evangelical Christianity"
Journal of Asian Missions

By contrast, the transnational growth of the independent *Iglesia Ni Cristo* was relatively swift; in less than five decades, it set up formal mission in the United States and other countries around the world.

Joaquin Jay Gonzales III
Filipino American Faith in Action

"IMPRESSIVE GROWTH IN MEMBERSHIP ... The growth of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ... can be considered phenomenal by any standard ... In terms of membership, the growth of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* since 1914 may be described as astounding. From a handful of adherents during its pioneering years, the membership of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* has multiplied to millions."

Teodoro M. Locsin
Editor
***Philippine Free Press: The Philippine Century* (1900-2000)**

"When the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* was registered with the government on July 27, 1914, there were only 14 members, all poor Filipino laborers. Since then, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* has swelled to millions all over the world. Thus, it takes a person on vision to lead a global congregation that has pegged members in more than 100 countries and territories to date. ... Although this unprecedented growth may be deemed intimidating by other established religions in the country, for the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, it proves the hand of God in their ministry."

Philippine Graphic,
November 5, 2012

What a glorious journey!

Many didn't believe the mission in the beginning:
Loved ones, yes, and even friends;
For how could one man embark on a journey—
Daunting through most turns and bends?

From the Far East, from the isles of the sea;
The Last Messenger taught of the one true God;
Where once people knew not of mercy—
They came to learn His wondrous love.

One by one, sheep entered into the fold:
Guided by the beckoning light from above;
The hale, like the lame, the deaf, and the blind—
To receive a treasure no one could rob.

Armed with faith the Last Messenger marched on:
Unfazed by trials and persecution;
He went about preaching God's wisdom—
That truth may shine, so does salvation.

Then, the good news reached the Far West:
Where others, too, felt God's bountiful grace;
Eyes were opened, hearts were warmed—
As the faithful sang a new song of praise.

Now, the little seed sown a century ago:
Has truly grown. Is little no more;
From the sun's rising, has gone around the world—
Reaching beyond the far western shore.

Yes, people of different colors and creeds:
Hence, embrace the true Church Of Christ;
Everyone striving to reach spiritual maturity—
Perfection, and the promised eternal life.

Far and wide, people continue to marvel:
At the unhampered Evangelical Mission;
Men, once wayward, now await—
The heavenly abode, the cherished salvation.

While traversing this world where tests abound:
And for every second, in danger of death;
The elect vow to remain steadfast to the end—
To be one with their caring guardian of the faith.

Through one hundred years of Divine Providence:
The chosen have truly witnessed many a victory;
In joyful adoration they now heartily exclaim—
"Thank You, Father. What a glorious journey!"

Nicanor P. Tiosen
Quezon City, Philippines

when his beloved father Brother Eraño, passed away on August 31, 2009, at the age of 84, after more than 46 years of blessed and dedicated stewardship of the Church. A well-trained and experienced leader, Brother Eduardo began to tirelessly visit local congregations in various parts of the world. In a short span of time, through his dynamic and able leadership, and most of all through the help of the Almighty God, he has established more local congregations and ecclesiastical districts, ordained thousands of new ministers and inspired thousands of young men to join the ministry. He has intensified the infrastructure program of the Church through construction of hundreds of huge and magnificent worship buildings, acquisition and conversion of multiple buildings into places of worship outside the Philippines. One infrastructure among the other huge edifices that will surely not escape world attention is the biggest dome arena to date—the Philippine Arena that will serve as the main venue of the Church's Centennial Celebration and its future big events.

Persecution still does exist. There will always be people who will despise, use invectives, or go against the Church because of its doctrines and enviable glaring success. But so noticeable today, not only the lowly, but, even the high and the mighty express their admiration, and marvel at the tremendous success of the Church. They see its many achievements not only in its infrastructure program but also in its work of evangelization, converting hundreds of thousands of multi-racial people into the Church. They wonder how the Church is able to keep on buying properties outside the Philippines while other churches are selling theirs, at a time when the whole world is staggering from severe and unrelenting economic recession. They also witness the world record breaking civic activities of the Church that continue to benefit millions of needy people.

Many still believe and say that the triumphs of the Church from the time of Brother Felix Manalo to the present are just a stroke of luck and have nothing to do with God's work. This is the reason many until now refuse to join the Church and there are some who do not give up in finding means to undermine and overthrow this God-given work. The Church prays to God that these people, out of His compassion and mercy, may eventually be among those who will "see and know, And consider and understand together, That the hand of the LORD has done this" (Isa. 41:20, *Ibid.*). May they learn from what "a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all people" said to those who were furiously opposing the apostles that, "if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God" (Acts 5:34, 38-39, *Ibid.*). Indeed, God has fulfilled His promise to His messenger from the ends of the earth that He would uphold him in the face of many enemies:

"Behold, all those who were incensed against you Shall be ashamed and disgraced; They shall be as nothing, And those who strive with you shall perish. You shall seek them and not find them—Those who contended with you. Those who war against you Shall be as nothing, As a nonexistent thing. For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'" (Isa. 41:11-13, *Ibid.*)

A century has passed in the history of the Church filled with good memories. Each year, certainly is a milestone because of the bountiful blessings both spiritual and material, that God has generously showered upon the Church. All of these serve as witnesses to His unfailing love and to the fact that the Church Of Christ in these last days belongs to Him, and the one that has the promise of salvation. Thus, let us follow the admonition of the apostles to Christ's beloved Church:

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." (Heb. 12:1, *Ibid.*)

No one among us knows when we shall reach the end of our race, or knows how much longer the world will last, but this is one thing we know and are sure of—God Who is worthy of all our praises and thanksgiving expects us to run with endurance and determination in the remaining portion of our race.

ISAIAS T. SAMSON JR.
Editor-in-Chief

have tried relentlessly to oppose the work that God entrusted to His messenger in these last days. The powerful and influential detractors of the Church adamantly used each and every possible means to destroy it. Pioneer members of the Church who have lived to see the present glorious status of the Church could not forget the years when persecutors would create distractions and troubles during their evangelical missions and worse, during their worship services. Wherever they went, persecutors were not satisfied hurling at them mean, sarcastic, and derogatory words, but many times became physical, violent, and even nasty by throwing at them not only rocks and hard objects but sometimes, human waste; but all of these, did not even cause a dent in their faith. Until now, there is neither a trace of regret on their faces nor even an iota of a defiant mentality questioning God why He had allowed or even made them pass through all those trials. They consider their difficult experiences as truly a blessing in disguise because by looking back at the early days of the Church, all the more they see, understand, and appreciate the present—the glorious status of the Church. Their faith was further strengthened by the fulfillment of God's promises to His messenger and to His Church from the ends of the earth:

"*You* whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its farthest regions, And said to you, 'You *are* My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away: Fear not, for I *am* with you; Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'" (Isa. 41:9-10, *NKJV*)

The members in places outside the Philippines, most especially the pioneers from the western part of the globe, have more reasons to count their blessings. They have experienced the manifold blessings of God having been beneficiaries both of His works in the Far East and in the Far West, for God did not only prophesy the emergence of His children from the Far East but also the gathering of His children from the Far West:

"From the far east will I bring your offspring, and from the far west I will gather you." (Isa. 43:5, *Moffatt Translation*)

The *World Almanac* identifies the Far West as "California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii ..." all in the United States of America. On July 27, 1968, this prophecy began to be fulfilled when brethren from the Philippines who migrated to Hawaii were gathered in a spirit-filled worship service officiated by the then Executive Minister of the Church, Brother Eraño G. Manalo. As further fulfillment of the said prophecy, Brother Eraño proceeded immediately to San Francisco, California to also officiate the worship service gathering of the members in the said state. This "Gathering Work" happened when the Church Of Christ, after everything it has gone through, has reached its glorious posture in the Far East as also prophesied by God:

"Till in the far west men have awe of the Eternal, and in the east they see his brilliant deeds; for his vengeance pours out like a pent-up stream, driven by a blast of wind." (Isa. 59:19, *Moffatt Translation*)

The expansion of the Church in the Far West triggered a more comprehensive work of salvation—becoming worldwide in its scope eventually establishing local congregations and groups worship service, and ecclesiastical districts in almost 100 countries and territories and membership comprising 123 nationalities, thus, fulfilling the words of our Lord Jesus Christ:

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14, *NKJV*)

Most memorable of the expansion works of the Church is the establishment of the local congregations in Rome, Italy on July 27, 1994, signifying the restoration of the Church in Rome; in Jerusalem in Israel on March 31, 1996, signifying the Church's return to its original home; and in Athens, Greece on May 10, 1997, signifying the extension of the Gentile mission. All these historical and providential achievements happened during the administration of Brother Eraño G. Manalo.

Another very important milestone of the Church was the election of Brother Eduardo V. Manalo on May 6, 1994, as the Deputy Executive Minister of the Church. Fifteen years and three months thereafter, Brother Eduardo assumed leadership in the Church

100 years of God's blessings to the Church Of Christ

ONE HUNDRED YEARS, not simply years gone by, not even a single ordinary year too, for each year was special, indeed, a blessed one. Today, majority of the members of the Church Of Christ are either born or converted into the Church at a time when it has already reached its glorious stature. For them, seeing what the Church is now is more than enough reason to rejoice and be thankful to God.

Indeed they are right, but to be fully appreciative of the present and understand how great the works of God really are, it is imperative that we recollect the past—the time when God's Messenger in these last days, Brother Felix Y. Manalo began preaching the pristine words of God and the early stage of the Church Of Christ that were filled with trials and tribulations. To mention a few—problems with logistics and manpower which are so common among budding organizations, intense persecutions from so-called religious people who considered the doctrines of the Church offensive for being so different from theirs, threats from internal conflicts, such as divisions and schisms, caused by "false brethren secretly brought in" to the Church, and even by a few who joined the ministry not to "serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly" (Gal. 2:4; Phil. 3:19; Rom. 16:18, *New King James Version*).

The Second World War and the insurgencies thereafter that plagued the Philippines had their own unsuccessful share in hindering the works of the Church, although these infamous events became instrumental in claiming the lives of not a few ministers, evangelical workers, officers, and members in the line of duty. All of these, from outside observers' point of view, are the "downs" and the "bad times" in the history of the Church. However, they can never be rightfully and scripturally considered as such; instead, all the years that had passed and everything that happened therein are blessed years in the eyes of God's people in these last days, how could those years be considered blessed?

God had allowed His people in these last days to go through years of persecutions, adversities, and various trials, to show and underscore the realization of His promises to His Messenger and to the works He had entrusted him, and that nothing and no one could hinder them. He said, "From eternity to eternity I am God. No one can oppose what I do" (Isa. 43:13, *Living Bible*). Indeed, so many

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF BULACAN
CITY OF MALOLOS

Once again the historic province of Bulacan bears witness and plays host to another momentous event that we believe will transform and level up the physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual landscape of this hollowed ground that cradled the first three republics not only in the Philippines but in the whole of what was known then, geographically and biblically as the Far East.

From the point of view of the Old World, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, North Asia and the various isles of South Pacific were Far East. But "Far East" has a prophetic biblical significance which is slowly unfolding in this present age and time. As we gather here today to dedicate and consecrate to God Almighty the City of Victory crowned with the Philippine Dome, reputed to be the largest and most awesome of its kind in the entire world, we partake of the fulfillment of this prophecy even as we affirm the magnitude of our faith in the Lord of History that allowed history to repeat itself in Bulacan on a higher plane.

In 1898, God had willed that the first Philippine Republic, product of our centuries of struggle for political independence as a people, be inaugurated in Bulacan. Today, we are inaugurating in Bulacan yet another government, a heavenly one, the stronghold of God's kingdom on earth.

For Ciudad de Victoria symbolizes the triumph of the spirit over the flesh and mundane matters. It is a testimony of the Almighty's faithfulness to every man, woman and child who was persecuted and reviled on His account. Remember the days when the keepers of the faith—the leaders and members of the Church of Christ – were being harassed and hurled invectives and how steadfastly they held on and clung tenaciously to their beliefs.

Not only did the flock multiply in number. It even grew a hundredfold in wealth, power and influence and radiated its truth not only in every nock and cranny of these far-flung islands of the East but around the globe and this Dome, this Philippine Arena, is a tangible living expression of the undeniable fact that God has not turned His back on the flock but has instead upheld it, strengthened it, grappled it by the hand and guided its feet every step of the way.

As a tree is known by its fruits, so the Iglesia Ni Cristo will always bear the fruit of God's immeasurable love and blessings and the Ciudad de Victoria and this Dome will forever be enshrined in the hearts of every Bulaqueño as a reminder, a memorial of righteousness' victory over iniquity, of constancy's overpowering sway on success and achievement and the ascendancy of the immutable truth that "unless the Lord builds the house, its workers labour in vain."

It is the Lord who built this city; it is the Lord who built this Dome and it is through His graciousness and kindness that He has bestowed upon its workers the strength, fortitude and wisdom to finish it on time as a reward for His servants' One Hundred Years of fidelity and allegiance to the Faith and the doctrines of the Iglesia. Purihin ang inyong pananampalataya at pananalig!

Sadyang ginawa ng inyong matibay at hindi-nagbabawa na kapakumbabaan at pagtalima sa kalooban ng Poong Maykapal na maging kapalad-palaran ang dakilang lalawigan ng Bulacan nang piliin po ninyong dito matayo ang Philippine Arena na matatala bilang pinaka-malaking bubungan sa buong mundo na binalangkas at binuo ng tao sa alinpamang panahon hanggang sa kasalukuyan upang maging sentro ng pagpapahayag sa lahat ng kapangyarihan, kadakilaan at kabutihan ng Diyos.

Maaaring ang Atenas ng matandang Gresya ay nakapagpatayo ng isang Parthenon sa Acropolis noong panahon ni Pericles sa karangalan ng diyosang si Athena na nagbabadya ng rurok ng klasikong arkitekturang Griyego.

Maaaring ang mararahas na emperador ng sinaunang Roma ay may naitindig na ampiteatrong kayang maglaman ng mahigit limampung libong manonood na tulad ng Colosseum, isang higanteng instrukturang walang naging gampanin kundi sulsulan ang pagka-banidoso ng mga maharlikang angkan at maging piping saksi sa pagkatay ng libu-libong Kristiyanong tumigmok ng dugong umagos mula sa katawan ng mga martir at gladyador.

Maaaring marami pang mga bansa at kabihasanan sa iba't ibang panig ng daigdig na sa rurok ng kanilang kabantugan at kadakilaan ay nakapag-iwan sa sangkatauhan at sa kasaysayan ng mga kamangha-manghang pisikal na instrukturang hanggang sa kasalukuyang panahon ay atin pa ring minamasdan nang may paghanga at pagka-andap. Mga templo, palasyo at bahay-pamahalaang pinagtipunan ng maraming tao sa iba't ibang antas ng panahon at kasaysayan.

Subalit sadyang naiiba at katangi-tangi ang Philippine Arena o ang Philippine Dome. Unang-una, ito ay tinayo sa karangalan hindi ng sinupamang diyus-diyosan o mga hari-hariang uhaw sa dugo. Ito'y itinayo bilang trumpeta ng pagpupuri at pagbibigay-pugay sa iisang Diyos upang mula sa kinalalagyan nito ay matipon at pumailanlang ang mga sigaw at awit ng pagsamba at pagbubunyi sa Hari ng mga Hari at Panginoon ng Santinakpan mula sa puso ng Kanyang mga kawan at nasasakupan. Ikalawa, ang Ciudad de Victoria kung saan pinakatampok na hiyas ang masaklaw na sukob nito ay bunga ng pag-ibig at pananampalataya ng mga nagsisipanambahang ang kalakhang bahagi ay binubuo ng mga mananampatayang Pilipino na nananahan sa Kapuluang ito at nakakalat hanggang sa kabilang ibayo ng daigdig. Ipinahihiwatig ng Ciudad de Victoria at ipinararating sa sambayanang Pilipino at sa mga namumuno sa gubyerno kung paanong ang tiwalang nagbuklod sa pagitan ng mga myembro at lider ng Iglesia ni Cristo ay naging kasangkapan upang magbunga ng mga bagay na maituturing na himala at halos imposible. Sa pamamatnubay ng Poong Lumikha na matamang nakasubaybay sa lahat at buong kapatiran, sa walang pagmamaliw na bisyon at maalindog na pangitain ng mga namahala sa Iglesia, sa matapat at walang pag-iimbot na pagtupad ng mga katiwala ng Diyos sa mga pananagutan at obligasyong iniatang sa kanilang mga balikat —sa madaling sabi ay sa mabuting pangangasiwa ng mga pinuno ng Iglesia na nagsilbing disi plinang nagbibigkis sa kanilang patuloy na lumalaking kapatiran—ay sinapit ng Iglesia ang ika-isandaang taon ng kanyang maluwalhating pag-iral.

Ang susunod na isandaang taon ng katagumpayan ay itatakda ng ikatlong suhay sa tungkong-kalan ng kanilang lakas at iyan ay ang marubdob na pagkakaisa na humuhugot ng inspirasyon sa may kagaanang-loob na pagsunod ng kasapian sa mga atas at tagubilin ng Banal na Kasulatan upang mula sa apoy nito ay patuloy na pandayin at hubugin ang isang pamayanang kalugud-lugod sa Diyos, katanggap-tanggap na mabuting halimbawa sa kapwa, kainggit-inggit na pamantayan ng kaasalan sa mga pamahalaan at gubyernong umiiral at karapat-dapat na putong sa isang magiting at makasaysayang lalawigang tulad ng Bulacan.

Nawa po'y malukuban ng kulturang ito ng pananagumpay at kasikhayan ang ating buong sambayanan mula rito sa lungsod ng tagumpay—ang Ciudad de Victoria.

Magandang araw po at mabuhay ang Iglesia! Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat.

GOVERNOR
WILHELMINO M. SY-ALVARADO

"Lalawigan ko'y ikaw. Lingkod mo ako"

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the Vice President

MENSAHE

Nais kong ipaabot ang aking taos-pusong pagbati at pakikiisa sa pagdiriwang ng ika-100 na anibersaryo ng Iglesia ni Cristo (INC).

Saksi ang kasaysayan sa pagyabong ng kasapian ng INC, at ang pagyabong na ito ay umusbong sa taimtim na pananalig sa Salita ng Diyos ng milyun-milyon ninyong kasapi. Kapugay-pugay din ang dedikasyon ng INC sa diwa ng pagtulong sa mga kababayang naghihikahos na ilang beses nang napatunayan sa Pilipinas at maging sa ibang bansa.

Dalangin ko ang patuloy na paggabay ng Dakilang Panginoon sa pamunuan at sa buong Kawan ng INC upang walang patid pa ninyong maipalaganap ang Banal na Salita sa susunod na 100 taon.

JEJOMAR C. BINAY

中華民國總統　馬英九
President Ma Ying-jeou

Congratulatory Message to the
Iglesia Ni Cristo Centennial Celebration

May 2014

Dear Executive Minister Eduardo Manalo:

I wish to extend my sincerest congratulations on the centennial celebration of the Iglesia Ni Cristo (INC) and the inauguration of the Philippine Arena. It is a remarkable achievement indeed that over the past 100 years, INC has become the third largest religious denomination in the Philippines, with over 5,000 congregations worldwide. These include 11 congregations in the Republic of China (Taiwan), which proudly upholds the principle of freedom of religion.

INC's century-long devotion to caring for the needy, the underprivileged and the vulnerable is profoundly admirable. Examples include such INC endeavors as the Lingap sa Mamamayan (Aid to Humanity) program, and worldwide charity efforts to help survivors of super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) in the Philippines. As a provider of humanitarian aid worldwide, Taiwan affirms the spirit behind these programs.

As Iglesia Ni Cristo marks its centennial, I commend its achievements and offer my earnest wish that it may continue contributing spiritual strength to the world and fostering harmony and peace for many centuries to come.

Ma Ying-jeou

中華民國總統府
Office of the President of the Republic of China (Taiwan)

Prime Minister

Prime Minister Message for Church of Christ – Iglesia ni Cristo

I would like to wish the Church of Christ – Iglesia ni Cristo – and its congregation all the best for the upcoming centenary celebrations.

The Church of Christ in New Zealand plays an important role in bringing together our Filipino community.

New Zealand is an increasingly diverse and vibrant nation. The Filipino community makes a vital contribution to this diversity and our society is richer for it.

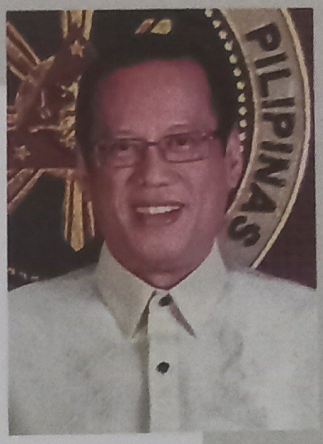
The New Zealand government provided relief to the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. We were proud to stand alongside organisations, like the Church of Christ, who also provided valuable support to the victims of the natural disaster.

Thank you for the work you do, and all the best for successful centenary celebrations.

Best wishes,

Rt Hon John Key
PRIME MINISTER

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand. Telephone 64 4 817 6800



MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

MENSAHE

Kaisa ng sambayanang Pilipino, binabati ko ang bawat kaanib ng **Iglesia ni Cristo** sa pagdiriwang ng inyong **Sentenaryo**.

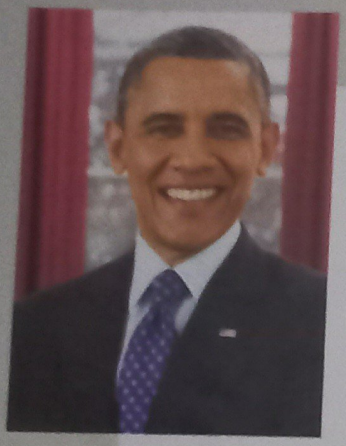
Nasubaybayan ng ating bayan kung paanong yumabong ang kongregasyong unang tinipon ni Kgg. Felix Manalo. Sa pagsisikap ng bawat isa sa inyo, lumawak ang saklaw ng pangangaral, gawa, at pananampalataya ng Iglesia ni Cristo. Ang araw na ito ay sagisag ng tagumpay ng inyong misyon—ang pagbuo ninyo ng isang matatag na komunidad na tinatanglawan ng mga aral ng Maykapal.

Biyayaan pa nawa ang Iglesia ni Cristo ng lakas upang maipagpatuloy ang inyong mga gawain. Kasabay nito, hangad ko ang paglalim ng ating ugnayan at pagtataya sa pagtataguyod ng tunay na reporma sa ating lipunan. Sa ilalim ng pamumuno ni Kgg. Eduardo Manalo, hinuhubog ang bawat miyembro ng Iglesia ni Cristo na pumanig sa katotohanan, maging mabuting halimbawa sa ating kapwa, at magtulungan para sa ikasusulong ng bansa.

Lubos akong nagpapasalamat sa patuloy na pakikibalikat ng inyong kongregasyon sa ating agenda ng mabuting pamamahala. Sikapin pa nating itaguyod ang pagbabago sa ating mga pamayanan, daigin ang mga hadlang sa ating pag-usad, at tunguhin ang isang maunlad, mapayapa, at maliwanag na bukas para sa lahat.

BENIGNO S. AQUINO III

MAYNILA
27 Hulyo 2014



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 15, 2014

Eduardo V. Manalo
Executive Minister
Iglesia Ni Cristo (Church of Christ)

I am pleased to join in celebrating your 100th anniversary.

Throughout our Nation's history, places of worship have brought us together in the spirit of faith and love. Offering space for celebration in times of joy and comfort in times of uncertainty, they help foster a strong sense of community and call on us to meet life's most sacred responsibility—to give of ourselves in service to others.

As you mark this special milestone, I hope you take pride in your community's commitment to faith. May the years ahead be filled with continued blessings.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE MINISTER
IGLESIA NI CRISTO

MESSAGE

With utmost humility, we offer our heartfelt praises and thanks to our Almighty Father as we celebrate 100 years of His blessings to the Iglesia Ni Cristo (Church Of Christ). It is our unshakable faith—firmly rooted in the Bible—that the emergence of this Church in the Philippines a century ago and its eventual flourishing in all corners of the world is the work of God—the fulfillment of His prophetic words written in the Holy Scriptures.

For a hundred years now, the Lord God has been upholding, protecting, and guiding this Church such that from a humble beginning it reached its present stature despite the persecutions that it encountered, for He Himself declared: "From eternity to eternity I am God. No one can oppose what I do" (Isa. 43:13, Living Bible).

We have every reason to be thankful to the Almighty God. By virtue of our membership in the Church established by His Son, He recognizes us as His sons and daughters. He chose us and gave us the right to worship and glorify Him.

Now, as we celebrate the Centennial of the Iglesia Ni Cristo, we are exceedingly happy and deeply grateful to God who always leads the Church to victory after victory, indeed in triumphal procession, through Christ. This is manifest in the continuous growth of Church membership, resulting in the establishment of more local congregations worldwide. In turn, this necessitates the unceasing construction of worship buildings and the purchase of properties for Church use the world over despite worsening economic conditions aggravated by man-made and natural calamities. Moreover, the number of ministers who look after the brethren's spiritual well-being keeps on increasing as more and more devoted members enter the school of ministry.

Whatever we have accomplished in the Church, we have done it because of God's help and guidance. We owe the success of all of our endeavors to God, and it is to Him that we give all praise. In joyful adoration, we offer Him all honor and glory.

Our zeal in serving our Creator does not end with the Centennial Celebration but goes beyond it. Hence, it is my fervent prayer that all of you strive for Christian perfection and spiritual maturity. Let us give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord and eagerly answer His call for abundant fruit bearing for the glory of God, our Father in heaven. By doing so, we will be given a very great welcome into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and take part in the greatest celebration of all.

We must live our lives worthy of Christ's name that we may show how much we appreciate and value God's work of salvation. This was what Brother Felix Y. Manalo, God's Messenger in these last days, and Brother Eraño G. Manalo, our late Executive Minister, unselfishly endeavored for our sakes during their entire lives.

I urge you to make the Centennial Celebration truly meaningful by obeying the admonition of Christ's apostles not to waste our precious time in sinful acts, as God is already putting the finishing touches on the work of salvation. Instead, may we all put to good use the spiritual gifts that God gave us and serve Him with a heart full of devotion.

May our Lord God's countless graces, for which we are rejoicing, inspire us to be all the more active in our services to Him while we journey through this world on our way to the heavenly kingdom. Then we shall be deemed worthy of receiving the Almighty Father's reward to His faithful children—salvation and eternal life.

Happy Centennial to all! Praise be to God!

EDUARDO V. MANALO

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Ako'y Iglesia Ni Cristo

1

Ako'y Iglesia Ni Cristo
Ang Iglesiang hinulaan;
Nakatanim sa aking puso
Lahat Niyang aral.

2

Si Cristo ay susundin ko
Ano man ang kasapitan
Ako'y Iglesia Ni Cristo
Hanggang kamatayan.

Koro

Ako'y laging maglilingkod,
Sa Diyos at kay Jesus;
Sa hirap at pag-uusig
Ako'y magtitiis.

Amen

I am a Member of the Church Of Christ

1

Oh, I am one of the chosen,
A member of the Church Of Christ;
The teachings of Almighty God
I'll treasure in my heart.

2

I shall obey my Lord Jesus,
Oh, come what may in my sojourn,
A member of the Church Of Christ
Till death should claim my life.

Refrain

My God and Jesus Christ, His Son,
Forever I will serve;
All hardship and adversity
I will brave and endure.

Amen

PASUGO

GOD'S MESSAGE

SPECIAL ISSUE

100 YEARS OF GOD'S BLESSINGS

1914 TO THE 2014

IGLESIA NI CRISTO

(CHURCH OF CHRIST)